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# LONE LIFE:

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"PRAIRIE AND FOREST," "GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," "AFLOAT AND ASHORE,"  
"ALL ROUND THE WORLD," "A HUNTER'S ADVENTURES IN THE  
FAR WEST," "PRAIRIE FARMS AND PRAIRIE FOLKS,"  
"ACCESSIBLE FIELD SPORTS," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1875.

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1918-1877

7. B. M. 1919-5-27

TO

EMILY

I DEDICATE THIS WORK,

WITHOUT WHOM THE REMAINDER OF MY EXISTENCE WOULD

TRULY BE

A LONE LIFE.

ATLANTIC CLUB,  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD.





# LONE LIFE:

## A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS.



### CHAPTER I.

IN the month of October, on a peculiarly English day, dull, raw, damp, and dirty, I set sail from Liverpool. There was just sufficient swell on the bar to send half the passengers to their bunks, and make brandy and soda in great request among the remainder.

When outside, the timid expressed themselves in strong terms against the utter disregard for life possessed by nautical men, in going to sea in such weather, the objects of their indignation looking rosy, energetic, and far from conscious that they were likely soon to become food for fishes.

The further we retreated from the shores of Old England the heavier became the seas, and the winds piped up in proportion ; but in spite of a Tripoli being smashed on the coast of Ireland, a City of Boston foundering in mid ocean, and the Atlantic having knocked herself into a cocked-hat on Nova Scotia, nothing occurred to break the monotony of our voyage, unless a mania for draw-poker, and a lottery epidemic, both of which were most virulent and general, cold water being the sole application that appeared to act as a mitigator, for it was only while a blue sea was knocking about the furniture in the smoking-room, that any cessation in these maladies became noticeable.

Some inhabitants of London escaped the sting of the plague, neither was Egypt entirely depopulated by the same disease, so we had on board a few that were not affected by the prevailing disorders. These were generally young men who dreamt of collisions by night and thought of shipwrecks by day, who nearly went off their legs from horror when a weather-beaten salt was more forcible than polite in language, or listened with elongated pious face and upturned eyes to the latest and raciest of jokes.

But in spite of croakers and predictors of evil, Sandy Hook was sighted at sunrise ; in a few hours



afterwards New York was gained, and our Transatlantic passage was completed within eleven days.

A bath, change of clothes, and good dinner at Delmonico's took away my sea-legs, and caused me to feel as free from fatigue as if I had not been submitted to greater exertion than a stroll down Regent-street.

The metropolis of the Western World has been so often described that I will not inflict the reader with one word upon the subject further than say that it looked none the less busy than in former times, and that the numerous new buildings that had been erected were well worthy to grace any city in the universe.

My desire is to escape the bustle and din of traffic, to get where the puffing of locomotives, and the sonorous yell of the steam whistle has not penetrated—to be surrounded by the works of Nature, not those of man.

To accomplish this in the most rapid and agreeable manner, I take passage *viâ* the Hudson River Railroad to Lewiston by way of Albany, for to the North—the far-distant North, region of lakes and rivers, of boundless woods and barrens, of deep winter snows and nightless days—is my destination.

When the conveyance deposits me at the train, and the hurry and bustle of securing my ticket and check-

ing my baggage has passed, I feel that I have earned the right to take notice of the different sights that surround me, foremost among which is an immense board with the novel information indited upon it, "When you hear the bell look out for the locomotive." And scarcely had I commenced to puzzle my brain on this gratuitous hint, than a most discordant din caused me to look forth from my car, when I found out that it was a warning to clear the track and give place to the advance of the powerful steam horse.

For miles we thread streets bounded on both sides by populous dwellings, still not a rope or ditch separates the railway from other traffic, yet troops of children on either side play at the various games most in vogue among the rising generation of the Great Republic. Doting mothers here, I think, must have an anxious time. Still, I must confess, I did not see any excited females rushing about to look after their progeny. The truth of the matter is simply this: at the age English hopefuls would be in perambulators, or at any event under charge of a nursery-maid, these embryo western citizens are able to take care of themselves.

By degrees dwellings become less numerous and more irregular in style of architecture, and our pace increases to fifteen miles an hour, soon affording us a view of the glorious Hudson River, and of the

rocky wood-clad heights that surround it. Of all seasons of the year this is the one to see this locality in perfection, for although never otherwise than beautiful, it is now indescribably lovely, recalling far more visions of dreamland than stern reality. As we advance every bend and turn disclose fresh attractions, till the brain becomes bewildered in its embarrassment of riches.

Six or seven hours under ordinary circumstances in a train, is certainly monotonous, but in this instance it is not so, for the mind has never been without food for thought, or the eye objects of admiration.

At length we halt opposite to Albany, city of canal-boats and machine shops, and the greater portion of our passengers hurry off to reach the ferry-boat that is waiting to convey them to its legislative shades, for know this is the capital of the State, and carpet-baggers, button-holers, and place-hunters haunt their friends in office, as mosquitoes would an intruder into a swamp.

At length newspaper boys, hackmen, and hotel touts are got rid of, the deep bass whistle grunts a warning, the bell again commences its measured tinkle, and the train is once more under motion.

Troy is the next place where a halt takes place; in size, go-aheadism, and wealth it outshines Albany. To carefully survey the people, and form an estimate of



them from their manner, you would find it difficult to decide whether they thought New York city should be proud of them, or they proud of New York city. No, the Trojans have no small estimate of themselves, and in their time have produced some well-known characters. Heenan, the prize-fighter, hailed from here, and its youth of the present generation take as much interest in the fraternity, as the clog-booted natives of Oldham would in a kicking match where one of the contestants was a stranger, and wore on his extremities pumps. To a native of the city of New York, Albany and Troy are "one-horse places," in their own opinion they are "a four-in-hand, and nothing less."

Again the tinkle tinkle of the bell tolls the hour for departure, and the train commences to move; still the bustle and confusion does not cease, for new arrivals are still seeking for seats, and friends bidding adieu are loth to part, but our speed continues to increase, the last moment for disembarkation has arrived, and in spite of the probabilities of broken legs and heads, all the non-travellers disembark safely, at least I did not hear of any casualties.

After leaving Troy, the Hudson is crossed, still a grand river, although a hundred and fifty miles from its mouth, and our course takes us through a lovely

country, rivalling in scenery the sunny slopes and hazel-covered brows of Shropshire.

Then the Mohawk River is reached, and for miles we retain it in view. Its varied banks, dark pools, murmuring rapids, possess many attractions, and not the least among them being the thrifty, clean, neat farm-houses everywhere to be seen, smiling forth from luxuriant orchard or hardwood grove. But the iron horse does not linger, and fresh scenes present themselves, the surface of the country becoming more level, the cultivation more thorough, till a vast district is entered, which for extent and fruitfulness it would be difficult to find a rival. No one can doubt that such is the case who uses his sight, for handsome dwelling-houses, immense barns,<sup>1</sup> well-stocked stack-yards, are never out of view, while droves of well-fed, aye, and well-bred cattle, feed on every pasture field and meadow.

A hundred years ago this was a wilderness. The primeval forest alone tenanted the land, and the beasts of the chase, with the exception of a few scattered tribes of Indians, were the sole animal life it supported. What better proof of the industry and energy of a great and free people can we desire, than such a wonderful transformation as has been here effected?

As daylight fades away, moonlight takes its place ; and such a moon ! none of your washy crescent-shaped nondescripts, but almost a rival in size and power to the sun.

Not that America possesses another or a better moon than we do, yet there are times in which she shows to greater advantage on the Western Continent than ever I have known her in England.

The change of light does not prevent a good view of the country being obtained, for when Cayuga and Geneva lakes are passed, the distant boats, and more distant villas, can easily be distinguished.

Travelling to me at night always appears more expeditious than by day. So when the crowd of baggage men and hotel touts crowd on board the cars before reaching the city of Rochester, I wonder how it is possible that the train has run so far.

But if for a moment I imagine some mistake has been made, that it is another town we are approaching, the deep dark abyss of the Genesee Falls, the towering flour mills, and the size of the station, set the matter at rest for ever.

Here I change carriages, Lewiston on Lake Ontario being my destination, for those I have come thus far in are bound for Buffalo.

After granting sufficient grace to enable me to

scald myself with a cup of coffee, the warning bell commences to tinkle, and disgusted with its monotonous tin-pot note, for I had not taken a liking to it from the commencement, I scramble into a seat, not without having to use considerable energy and force, for like myself many others had delayed to the last moment, and had no more idea of being left behind than your humble servant. All is said to be fair in love and war; I imagine that it is deemed so in trying to get into a train in America, after it has got under way.

After leaving Rochester the country is none the less rich than heretofore, wheat being the staple production, while fruit is cultivated to a great extent; in fact, the apples from this district cannot be surpassed, and are a large source of revenue to the farmer. The moon is still high in the heavens, so I can see for miles. The ridge in the distance is the commencement of elevated spurs, denominated the Bear Ridges, for at one time the bruin family were so numerous on them, that they constituted a large portion of the early settlers' food; but, alas! they have ceased to know what was once their home, and the only return the sportsman would find for his labour, who tramped over these wood-clad plateaus, would be abundance of woodcock, who, strange to say,

have only discovered this favourite feeding ground within a few years.

Lockport is next reached, well meriting the name for its locks are deserving of the greatest admiration' they being not only large, but admirably constructed. Their elevation and number I cannot say, still both are very great. Many years ago I resided near this thriving place of business; then it was only a village, and land was to be purchased within a few miles of its precincts for fifteen dollars an acre. After making the American coin into pounds sterling, I doubt if a square foot could now be bought between the canal and Lake Ontario.

On leaving the last-mentioned station, farm-yards, orchards, and woodlands are passed in pleasant succession, and ultimately the train slowly enters Lewiston, the termination of the first part of my journey, a pretty town situated upon the banks of the Niagara River, where it mingles its waters with blue Ontario. The dinner gong had sounded before I left my bedroom, for being constructed in pretty much the same mould as other mortals, I was sensible of the fatigue of yesterday's journey; however, the delay till next morning, when I should catch the steamer for Toronto, was of little moment, so I killed the enemy, time, by wandering about the fort and bastions that once had possessed no small amount of



importance. Like all garrison towns, there is an aristocratic tone about, *id est*, if the military element is not overdone, but only sufficient of it to give the slightest spice to society—for like garlic in cooking, admirable when not abused, the reverse when overdone.

The life of the officers of the United States regular service stationed here, I should think much resembled what it used to be in Great Britain in the good old days of four company depôts, before rifle drill, scaling drill, depôt battalions, and ever so many more devices were invented by a lot of feather-bed, bad-tempered, stay-at-home, theoretical and not practical old fools, for the worry and annoyance of those whose value in the field in case of war was without price.

Before me, as I write, looking back into the log-book of memory, I can see a General who never saw a shot fired in his life except at a review, bullying to death an old subaltern, whose brow was tanned with years of service on the plains of India, whose stalwart figure bore many a scar, and whose heart beat under numerous medals—because why? he had made a mistake in his addition, and forgot the weight of a bayonet. As long as the door of the Horse Guards is open to sycophants and the relatives of politicians, whose influence has to be bought

over, such things will exist, and thus we lose year by year men, one of whom would be of more use to the country than a brigade of the others.

In due time the steam-boat for Toronto sailed. Ontario was on her good behaviour, and looked as blue and calm as the Bay of Naples in midsummer, when not a breath of air moves with sufficient force to swell the lateen-rigged crafts that sleep upon its placid bosom. A few hours and our destination is reached. Changed from when I last saw it, yes, changed indeed, for dwellings and structures have risen where formerly nothing but waste common could be seen.

The old hotel, its name now forgotten, had given place to a structure worthy of any capital, but the change is acceptable, for the promise of creature comfort is greater than in days gone by, and while within the pale of civilisation, there are few fonder of luxury than self.

The difference between cities of the United States and Canada is very conspicuous, although both adopt the same styles of architecture; from this reason it is difficult to describe—the nearest simile that strikes me at the moment being, the former represents the strong man under the flush of a stimulant, the latter the same person under the effects of a powerful opiate.

Citizens of the Dominion may feel indignant at

what I have said; my answer is, that I do not see through the eyes of an untravelled fellow-citizen, but through those of a cosmopolitan.

Judging from the appearance of the principal streets at the fashionable hours of the afternoon, there was no scarcity of well-to-do, well-dressed, educated people; but if I am not mistaken society here is cut up into cliques, ever the bugbear of pleasant *réunions*, but where you have professionals and government *employés*, a largely represented mercantile community unless possessed of unbounded means and lavish in their hospitality, are certain to be looked down upon by that high class of society who serve their country for nominal salaries, which, however, I have never known them neglect to draw—possibly to give away in charity.

As I was going into a handsome shop I ran against a straight-haired, clean-shaved, smug, well-fed looking man, with a length of skirt to his coat almost rivalling an “Ulster;” he wore a white neck-tie, and I observed that the buttons on his outer garment were concentrated in a very close single file down the front. The fault was not mine, for I had my eyes straight to my front; he, on the other hand, was approaching the door, although his head was turned on one side to give a parting word of instruction to the shopman. Both being tolerably broad and stout we collided;

not that any injury was done, for the prominent portions of both were soft—very soft, I should say. Of course I raised my hat and murmured a word of apology, expecting a return of the courtesy. However, I was deceived in this nice-looking man—appearances, we all know, are deceptive—for with rather a knock-me-down air he gruffly exclaimed, “Can’t you look where you’re going, sir?” If I were not a most peaceable person, I believe I should have answered him in his own coin or trod on his toes. Out of curiosity I asked from the shopman this polite gentleman’s name and profession. I fear he must have made a mistake, or thought I alluded to some one else, for he said, “That is”—well it is better to leave out the name—“a high dignitary of the Church.” We have had jovial Father Tom Maguire, of coursing celebrity, also many a parson who could ride across country or whip a salmon river with all competitors, aye, and preach on Sunday a good orthodox sermon beside, but I never met a teacher of humility with less of the quality in his eye or bearing than this Dominion example of lowness of heart and humbleness of spirit. In every fold it is said that a black sheep exists, and this was doubtless that one; but why in earth, when the matter is so easy, don’t it get weeded out?

## CHAPTER II.

THE Queen's Hotel, my temporary head-quarters, was clean and comfortable, without being extravagant. The landlord was a most pleasant, agreeable, well-educated person, while his sister, the house-keeper, was a pattern that any in her walk of life would have done well to take for an example. In Toronto I remained several days, for here I intended laying in my principal supplies, both for consumption and trade with such Indians I might be thrown in contact.

In selecting my stock I was materially assisted by a gentleman to whom I had brought a letter of introduction, for, having been long in the fur trade, he was thoroughly conversant with what were the requirements of life beyond civilisation.

However, I must not neglect one purchase I have made, namely, a terrier. I was turning the corner



of Young-street when a lad passed me with a dog for sale. I gave the animal a careful look over, and I was so pleased with it that I determined to become a buyer. For ten dollars it became mine, and when I afterwards, at the hotel, had a more careful and thorough examination of my new acquisition, I came to the conclusion that I had obtained a treasure. The lad, who had come thus far to deliver over safely my property and to give me a receipt for the money he received, in answer to my inquiry whether the terrier would kill rats, responded, "Yes, and wood-chucks too, and they are plaguey tough to handle." The last portion of his sentence he need not have added, for well I knew that it was but the gamest of dogs, especially of such diminutive size, that were able successfully to cope with this marmot.

"But the name," continued I.

"Only Skye, sir."

"He isn't one of Captain M.'s breed?" A race of the purest Skye terriers, imported originally by the old gentleman from his own estate in that island.

"'Deed he is; although father has owned the stock for some time now, he got the breed first from the captain's."

If my informant spoke the truth, I had really

got a prize, and when I looked at my new acquisition, there was not a single point that would denote him not to be of the pure strain. And well I knew them, for in the old captain's society many years gone by, I had seen one of this very race, in less than a quarter of an hour, although cut and slashed across the legs and chest, draw three foxes from the same earth.

At length I was ready for the start—my baggage I had packed up and forwarded to Orillia by the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Railroad, while I determined to do the first thirty-five miles of my road on foot, for many years ago I had tramped it, and wished again to have a look at scenes familiar to my sight in the days of my youth.

Of all long uninteresting roads, Young-street is possibly the most so, for from the time it leaves the shores of Lake Ontario, till it has advanced over twenty miles inland, it is without a turn, the houses edging it in the lower portion far from attractive, with a want of trees most noticeable. Seventeen miles from Toronto, Richmond Hill is gained—a prosperous little place and a great improvement upon the part of the road traversed; but it is a long and steep climb to reach it. However, its position is worthy of notice, for the ridge on the summit of

which it stands is a watershed, streams rising on either side of which flow in reverse directions, the northern brooks travelling thousands of miles before they reach the lake, that the southern ones gain in twenty. In explanation of this, a watercourse rising at Richmond Hill and flowing due south, would reach Lake Ontario before it had travelled more than eighteen miles, while a similar stream rising at neighbouring springs, from the dip of the land would have its current directed north ; in the course of time it would enter Holland River, from there into Lake Simcoe, hence through the narrows into Lake Couchachin—then by the Severn into Georgian Bay, a portion of Lake Huron, the waters from which flow through Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River, before entering Ontario. Thus we see that the rise or depression of a foot of ground may sever thousands of miles streams which had their origin within a few yards of each other. Do not matters often as trivial sever lives for ever ?

At a roadside tavern at Richmond Hill, I dined at a famous ordinary ; the other guests were lusty, prosperous-looking representatives of their class, owing either to Scotland or Ireland their nativity.

It was soon apparent to me that I was regarded with inquisitive if not suspicious glances, and although

several attempts were made during the meal to draw me into conversation, I courteously declined the honour.

After dinner toddy or punch was ordered, the different names being used according to the country that had given the thirsty soul birth. Canadians I knew were accredited with being able to take a fair quantity of ardent spirits, but these farmers could do more, and as their demands were gratified, politics were discussed with additional vehemence.

As I had plenty of time, I rested and enjoyed my pipe, yes, and toddy too, for I was much interested in the conversation. At length a shrewd-looking old Scot, looking keenly at me, and expressing himself in very measured terms, said: "Weel, sir, you look a man o' education and a traveller, will you no agree with me that Mr. Mac—— will make a better member than that ranting blethering chap Mr. O'——?" At the termination of this inquiry several voices were raised together to dilate on the claims of the candidate of whom the O.' faction was in favour. But the old Scot again got the floor, and with the same earnestness of manner repeated the question previously asked—adding in parenthesis to the others: "We ken what we think, but we'd a' like to ken what the stranger thinks." So silence was established and all

looked forward as if anxious to hear my sentiments. So I found it incumbent on me to say something—which I did in very nearly these words :

“Gentlemen, I know nothing about the matter, so must decline to express an opinion one way or the other.”

“Weel, there’s mair caution about you than folks would gie you credit for from your looks,” said the old Scot.

“Nor devil the bit do his looks belie him ; it’s the pluck that’s wanting in him,” exclaims a regular broth of a boy.

“Well, you’re the last should find fault with him,” said a ferret-faced looking Lowlander, who kept his eyes on me though addressing the last speaker ; “I’ll bet you glasses round he’s a Fenian.”

“And what if he is, more power to his elbow,” exclaimed a good-looking Irish lad who previously had not spoken.

“Likelier far that he be an informer,” shouted the first Patlander.

So the clamour rose to boiling point. Neither faction would have me accredited to them at any price ; glasses were smashed upon the table, and sticks wheeled about, every indication of a free fight commenced, in which I knew I should be between



two fires, both willing to immolate me to their passions; so I watched my chance, got an opportunity, slipped out through the door, paid my reckoning, and continued my tramp.

I had now got into a neighbourhood that once I knew well, so sauntered on slowly, picking out from the number of new erections that had sprung up, houses that had once been occupied by old acquaintances. I was possibly about an hour thus engaged when the sound of approaching wheels caused me to turn round. A thick, well-fed, cob-like horse, drawing a light market waggon, on the seat of which was perched the driver, muffled up in such numerous wraps and coats as to cause him to look as broad as long, and evidently affected with more stimulant than he could carry stiffly, was close at hand. When abreast of me the Jehu shouted, "Wo there, canna ye hear, lass, wo!" and the mare stopped, and I recognised my Scotch acquaintance of the tavern.

Steadying himself, he commenced: "Weel, sir, although it's me that says it, ye did uncu good service to you're ain sel', to get ahint the door, down at the public, for though I say it mysel' I'd ha gied ye as bonny a rap over the head wi' my staff, as ye most ever had in your time. I dinna ken now whither I'm doing right to the laws and country no to tak'

you up for a revolutionarising Fenian," but several hiccups prevented him adding more.

Answering, I inquired, "On whose authority he called me a Fenian?"

"On the authority of"—hiccup—hiccup—"of every one."

"Well, you may tell every one from me, that they are a pack of fools. Good-day, good-day, sir," and I hurried on.

But the old fellow would not be left behind, but continued to denounce me as a Fenian, and I really commenced to fear that if strangers coming along heard him, they might imagine that there was sufficient truth in his statement to cause me serious hindrance.

So stopping and turning towards my persecutor, with less energy and more softness of voice I informed him that I should sleep at the hotel at Bond Head Lake, where I should probably arrive in an hour, when I would satisfy his curiosity, and prove to his satisfaction that I was not a Fenian.

But this old fellow would not be put off; every second word he declared I had no intention of going to Bond Head Lake, and that if he didn't arrest me then and there, he would not be doing his duty to his country, for he was a loyal subject, and his father

was a loyal subject, and how many more generations before them I forget.

I was nearly climbing the fence and leaving the road, when I thought better to satisfy him, for in his present drunken state he might go and alarm the neighbourhood, and have them turn out in pursuit of me. So stepping close up to him, I said, "I'm no Fenian, I'm a Scotchman, like yourself; look at the post-marks on these letters, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, and read this one."

The old man looked astonished, certainly incredulous; laying the reins over the splash-board he said, "I maun find my specs before I believe a word of what you say." So he searched every pocket for his spectacles, ultimately finding them in the most unlikely one, then he slowly deciphered the post-marks, and ultimately read a few words of the letter, then closed it, the whole nature of his manner changing. Shoving out his hand with much energy, he had got half-way through the sentence, "Gie me your neuf," when he went out headforemost over the front wheel of the waggon. However, he was a hardy old fellow, and soon regained his limbs, when he shook my hand till he nearly dislocated my arm.

At length I got him up on his seat in the conveyance, no easy job I can assure you, and would

have been much more troublesome if the sensible old mare did not appear to have become used to her master's peculiarities.

"Now jest lowp in," said my new chum, when he felt himself comfortably seated. "We'll jest gang back to Richmond Hill, and we'll ca' at Sam McClaudin's, whar we'll hae a wee drappie, when we'll gang across to the tavern and gie them Irish the d—dest lambasting for insulting a gentleman like you by calling him a Fenian."

At length my new acquaintance departed, and I was sincerely congratulating myself on it, when he again stopped the mare and shouted at the top of his voice :

"Did na you say you were going to sleep at Bond Head Tavern? I'll gang on and tell them you're coming, and wait for you mysel', for we maun hae a drap thegither."

Where I was left to my own thoughts, was about three miles beyond Richmond Hill, the very vicinity that I wished to pay particular attention to, for close by stands a house in which I have received never-forgotten kindnesses, and for a Canadian dwelling has more of the English, or rather Scotch country gentleman's residence about it than any other I have here visited.

Walking quietly up the long approach, familiarly

designated the avenue in old times, I made a detour so as to avoid being seen by the residents, for such a length of time had passed that, it was very improbable any I knew now remained. In this I was successful, for the only sound that broke the solitude was the baying of a deep-voiced hound.

Turning down a path I had once known so well, and after passing a short distance through a margin of pines—remnants spared from the original forest—I stood upon the lovely little lake, in which I had fished day after day, capturing in goodly numbers the gamest of all fresh-water fish for their size, black bass. I felt I was an intruder, therefore did not like to peer too far, so satisfied myself by looking at what used to be the landing-place, to see if the neat gig, or a successor, lay there as of old. No boat was to be seen, and from that circumstance I felt great changes had taken place in this once happy and contented home, for in days gone by, the head of the house, with either sons or daughters for oarsmen, used regularly to have his hour or two fishing previous to sunset. Yes, and I have often pulled bow with a fair-haired, tall, handsome daughter of the Highland laird pulling stroke, and I can well remember how all my thought would get concentrated in the long and sunlit locks that, disengaged from their fastenings by the exertion, would sway to and fro under my gaze.



But it was getting rapidly towards night, so I stole away, figuring up remembrances of a wide flap hat and scarlet ribbon around it, with a sweet expressive face beneath, possessed of such soft winning eyes as might well have caused havoc with the heart of the chief of Ulva's Island, and make him prefer the chance of a watery grave to being deprived of his lovely stolen bride.

Brilliant red clouds hung over the dark pines that hid the setting sun, when I arrived at Bond Head Lake. The host had evidently been prepared for my coming, for his attention was greater than could possibly be expected to be subtended to a travel-stained, dusty, plainly-habited traveller, so I was shown to the best bedroom, a girl far too well dressed for servant ordered promptly to fetch me hot water, and otherwise attend on the gentleman's wants. When left to myself I took a look at the little lake across the road in front of the house. As I had last seen it, it lay calm and silent, with the heavy shadows of many a forest tree glancing on its bosom, while the reflection of the giant full hunter's moon upon its surface tipped the slightest ripple—even the splash made by some tame ducks—with molten silver.

On descending from my dormitory to the coffee-

room, I met my friend of the waggon and mare; he was certainly more upright in his walk, and therefore I suppose more sober. Expecting my appearance he had brewed a whisky toddy, strong, hot, not too sweet, and just aware of the presence of lemon. I might have refused to take anything to drink if I had been asked the question previous to it being produced, but now that it was concocted and the brewer of it had exercised so much skill in its manufacture, I assented, and we hob-nobbed right merrily. My acquaintance was evidently well-known here, and from the lavish manner he threw about his silver, doubtless a very popular guest.

After my chop we adjourned to the smoking-room, where were two or three other guests, when the bottle circulated, and the old Scot soon became thick in his speech and dictatorial in his language. Again and again he told the story of Richmond Hill, only making this alteration, that Jock McFarlane, "whom ye all ken, and what's mair, think sa uncommon smart, but he's na that, and Tam Wilson would hae it that this braw Scotsman was a Fenian, and but for my ainsel' they might hae been the death o' him. And a wheen o' ranting Irishmen thought he was an informer, and but for me they would na hae used very kindly neither."

In his present fuddled state I have not the slightest doubt that he seriously believed he was speaking the veritable truth ; but when he went on to say, that “ he kent me from the vara first look, tho’ he had na been muckle o’ a traveller ; but he was dom’d that any man who would tak’ me for a Fenian must be a fule, and for a’ ye like to believe that carl Jock McFarlane did, and ye a’ think him a smart man.”

“ Well, not as smart as you are, uncle,” said one of the strangers.

“ Na, na, ye may say that,” replied the old man.

“ For I remember, now,” continued the first speaker, “ it’s not more than two years since, come next Candlesmas, that you sold Jock that bit of a pony for one hundred and ten dollars, that wasn’t worth five-and-twenty. Yes, uncle, you’re smarter than Jock McFarlane, altho’ he’s pretty hard to get the best of.”

“ You’re jist right,” responded the old man, then laughing out aloud, “ that’s a fac’, jist two years sine. Weel a weel, I did get the best o’ him, and I ne’er thought as muckle o’ ony money e’er I airned,” and turning to me with a broad smile on his face he continued, “ It wad na be quite the thing to do amang strangers, but Jock and me are auld, auld friends, and we are baith in Canada.”

“ Save me from my friends” I had often heard,

but never knew an instance to which it was more applicable than the present. Canadian horse jockeys get the reputation of being, as the Yankees say, "darn'd 'cute," and from the old man's idea, the customs of the land encouraged it.

As I retired to rest I heard this dry-throated old Gael singing for about the tenth time, "Geordie brewed a peck o' malt." I knew from what I had witnessed that he only commenced the stave when he thought it time to make a fresh brewing.

At breakfast I met him again; not a particle did he seem to suffer from his heavy potations of the previous evening—commencing the day with a hair of the dog that bit him, under the name of a wee drappy o' bitters.

Holland Landing was my destination, Newmarket my acquaintances, so he gave me a lift for some miles; but the parting came, and it was no easy one, for the hospitable old fellow had made up his mind to take me to his home, where the house and all that was in it was at my service as long as I chose to stay. The last I heard of him was, "Hoots, lassie, pit your best foot for'ard," and the mare rattled off at a twelve mile an hour gait down the rocky inclined road.

## CHAPTER III.

THE scenery from Bond Head to the vicinity of Holland Landing is not only pretty, but excellent arable land. A few years ago any quantity of it could have been bought for a very small price, now it would take a large purse to buy a respectable-sized homestead. It used to be a grand place to shoot deer, but clearing up the woodlands has doubtless driven all that class of game off, if any were spared to go.

Soon I heave in sight of the long flat marsh that margins Holland River; for miles it stretches uninterruptedly on either side, and visions come back of the bags of wild duck and baskets of muscalonge I have taken upon its stagnant bosom. On reaching the wharf I find no steam-boat sails that day, so as I have plenty of time and a sandwich in my pocket, I turn off on one side to visit a grove where I have often encamped in days gone by when deer hunting.

After a search I discover it, its appearance not improved by the occupants, a very dirty family of Indians, a remnant of the once powerful Chippewa tribe. They are truly a wretched-looking lot, reduced to this stage] of misery by their unquenchable love of whisky and intercourse with the white man. Trying to discover a familiar face among them, which I did not succeed in, I turned my steps towards Bradford, and soon found the old-fashioned, for this country, comfortable inn, where I resolve to lay over for the night.

The railroad from Toronto on its way to Barrie and Orillia runs close to it, and as may be expected from such a circumstance, it has increased in importance, but has lost much of the tidy, Sunday air that formerly pervaded it.

There was, in the evening, a noisy party of sportsmen in the next room—the public one—who had just returned from Beaver Town, they having been deer-shooting up beyond Balsam Lake, so I got into a quiet seat amongst them.

This had once been a favourite hunting-place of my own, so I listened with no small amount of interest. They had been moderately fortunate, so the youngsters were in high glee; the more staid and elder ones agreeing that their two weeks' work was nothing



to what they would have done ten or twelve years ago. This is the old cry, and unfortunately a true one for those fond of field-sports; game is rapidly upon the decrease unless you go beyond the verge of civilisation.

This Balsam Lake has quite a romance attached to it; at least the voice of the people living at Beaver Town had given it one. It was a lovely spot, and deserved such an honour.

The story ran that between thirty and forty years ago, a well-known Admiral in our Navy became so enamoured of Balsam Lake, that he bought a large extent of land upon its margin, and there moved his household gods. As he was possessed of abundant means, no expense was spared in erecting a suitable dwelling. So workmen were collected from far and near, and a handsome stone house built, the interior fittings of which were said to be sumptuous. Then a host of lumbermen were brought, and rapidly rod after rod of the original forest was cleared away, till hundreds of acres were fit for cultivation.

Then came the story oft told—still oftener never known—of a young wife repining for home, friends, and civilisation, insanity in the end drowning her longings, and, too late, the bereaved husband quitting the wilderness in the futile hope of restoring intellect

to the stricken one; death, unfortunately, was the only release her afflictions knew. So the broken-hearted sailor never returned; his arable grounds became an entangled thicket, and the house a ruin, for the place then was too far from settlements to induce any one to live upon it that depended upon the sale of their produce for obtaining the necessities of life.

Whether this tale is true, and the *dramatis personæ* were such as I have mentioned, I cannot vouch; but I have seen the tumble-down wrecked house, and shot deer in the second-growth timber that luxuriantly covered the soil where once had grown wheat. More than that, I have seen the grey wolf recklessly running down his quarry where, years ago, the skulking scoundrel dare not have shown himself without being saluted with a rifle-bullet.

American railways are not proverbial for velocity; Canadian ones deserve this character most thoroughly; but after many efforts on the part of the locomotive, in which the passenger could not help wondering whether they would be vouched success, we arrived at the village of Orillia—very much increased in size since I had last seen it, still none the less pretty.

Lake Couchachin, reaching almost to the residents' dwellings, rested in calm repose, its surface only being

broken by the dive of a wild-duck or loon, while opposite, listless-looking Rama was conspicuous, and the two islands half-way across loomed up, grand in their russet and scarlet covering of autumn foliage.

Many months I lived here, but so long is it since that I feel a stranger in the place that once knew me.

My baggage and dog I find safe ; the little fellow seems to recognise me, an honour he has never done before ; he is evidently one of those characters who do not make acquaintances in a hurry—good evidence of his sincerity when I have gained his confidence.

The hotel I put up at is one I have resided in before, but it has changed hands. I ask casually after a few of my old most intimate friends. Some have disappeared ; others rest under the sombre shadows of the pine-trees that surround the graveyard. Sufficient then, I will remain unknown. After supper—a meal that takes place in America about the time my old brother-officers are assembling in the ante-room for mess—I go forth on a tour of inspection. “What to see in a Canadian country village?” I hear inquired. Well, to smoke a pipe, yes, and get the fresh air—I may as well confess further, to learn if the house stood where in years gone by one of the

prettiest girls lived, and aye one of the most lovable that e'er it was my fate to meet.

But all is changed; only the ground on which it stood remains. And wondering that man could be guilty of such desecration, I return to the tavern dissatisfied with the world, and in far from an amiable humour.

I have inferred that the climate of Canada is prone to make people thirsty, this was amply proved by the number of loungers who dropped in at night to have a night-cap. The quantity of these each visitor provided himself with, I should think would make a pillow on his bed superfluous, but among all the imbibers I did not recognise one familiar face, and a little over twenty years had done all this.

What was my own retrospect in that space of time? what had I seen? where had I been? Nearly all over the earth, and witnessed the struggles of nation against nation, the belching forth of shot and shell, carnage and death. And why should others not stray from home and friends as well as myself?

A more magnificent night it could not have possibly been than it was when I retired to my room. Feeling disinclined for rest, possibly to revive memories of the past, I threw up my window. Before me, jutting far out into the lake, lay the old familiar

point. And the moon which shone full and grand beyond it, wrapped its outline in that misty shadowiness ever so attractive. The panorama was grasped in a minute, and my thoughts wandered back to my boy love. All this is very romantic, doubtless, but nevertheless true.

Some have not the courage to make the confession that they have ever loved, more look at such boyish escapades as things to be forgotten. I'm not inclined to do either, although such a weakness may be deemed unbecoming in a wanderer ; men whose mode of life should make them ever most indifferent to the tender passion. But the most improbable are its victims ; even soldiers suffer periodically, and I have known them so severely scorched, that years afterwards they have borne the scars.

"But touching the lady, now you have told us that such a person once existed who made an impression on your susceptible boyish feelings, what was she like?" I imagine asked, and have no hesitation to gratify such natural curiosity.

She looked better bred than human beings are usually moulded ; on foot or horseback, in promenade or ball-room, she could not have passed the least susceptible of the sons of man, the least inclined to exertion among the lords of creation, without their

turning to have a second glance, nay, a long fixed look at her handsome, graceful figure.

“And how did you meet her, and all that sort of thing?”

Well, in this way. I was staying at this village; for several days during my afternoon walk I met an erect, handsome, military-looking old gentleman. The cut of his clothes was certainly rather of an antiquated date, and exhibited indications that they had endured a fearful amount of brushing, but being ever scrupulously clean, failed to impress you with shabbiness.

With the courtesy of one of the old *régime*, the second time we were thrown in contact he bowed, the third time we met occasion was made to start a conversation.

My old friend, Captain —, had travelled a very great deal, seen much of life, was a keen observer, and a delightful conversationalist, and when he knew that I was the son of a military man, and one that had served with him in the Peninsula under the great Duke, we became so intimate that he invited me to visit him.

A perfect childlike simplicity and a superabundance of the gentlest feelings in human nature were his characteristics; still he had done everything, from



having his man out, to making his regiment throw away their knapsacks, to enable them to charge better, when he had the honour of leading his corps in one of the most brilliant affairs that took place between the American troops and ourselves, when we advanced on Washington previous to its capture. For which little escapade, viz., discarding the men's necessities, laughingly he used to tell how he was tried by court-martial, acquitted, but informed not to do it again. Half-pay was all the means he possessed, but even on that moiety was considered by his primitive neighbours "passing rich," as was the curate in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* on a much smaller stipend.

At length I paid my promised visit. I was fortunate, for I met the old gentleman engaged, spade in hand, among his flowers, to which he was remarkably attached and unremitting in his attention.

Ushering me into his sitting-room, from the abruptness of our entrance we surprised his daughter sitting in the recess of a window that looked out over the lake, busily engaged in mending her father's socks. Many young ladies would be ashamed if detected by a stranger engaged in such occupation. But she had not a particle of false pride in her veins, but rose with all the grace of a duchess, and met me with that unaffectedness and sincerity of manner

that at once prevents a guest from imagining that he is an intruder.

From that day forth my regard for the old captain grew apace, while for the daughter admiration changed into love, which kept increasing with the lapse of time as would vegetation in a perpetual spring, and really how could it be otherwise, for Miss —— was not only graceful, as I have said, but she was lovely. Her complexion was simply brilliant, but there was a transparency about it that whispered to me thoughts of consumption. She was even more beautiful than *distingué*, her face a perfect oval, her nose aquiline, with thin chiselled nostrils, her forehead which was smooth, broad, but not high, was shaded on either side with a wealth of chestnut-black wavy hair, generally worn simply caught up and fastened in a knot on the back of her classic-formed head. For a heroine of romance, a Lucy of Lammemoor, the world might have been searched over without finding as suitable a prototype. Still she did not impress you with sadness, quite the reverse, and her energy and industry never permitted her to be idle a moment.

The better to enjoy my partiality for field sports, I moved across the lake to the termination of a deep bay, distant about six miles from Orillia; but what did space matter, love made my arms strong and my

heart brave, for in all weathers, calm or storm, I would find myself at the old captain's once, sometimes twice a week. When I look back upon the black tempestuous nights that I have beat home, in my narrow long gig, with the sail reefed down to its smallest size, and ballast lumbering the floor to the very seats to make the craft able to bear up against the blasts, it appears to me perfectly marvellous how I ever escaped going to the bottom.

Autumn drifted into winter, and about the middle of December the ice came, the frost steadily increasing for nigh a week, but so far not a flake of snow had fallen ; so every afternoon saw my skates buckled on, and away I flew for Orillia, and the society of——well, I'll say the old captain's daughter.

I think it was Christmas Eve, if not, within a day or two of it ; the old gentleman, who had lately been indisposed, retired early, and I remained ; our *tête-à-tête* was delightful, and time sped so rapidly that midnight came before, yes, long before it was wanted.

Getting up, I prepared to go, sat down again, and postponed leave-taking a little longer. At length it was one o'clock, so buckling on my skates in the sitting-room, and well muffled up to keep out the keen frost, I went to the door accompanied by my companion, and found to our surprise that the ground and lake

were covered with snow, and that large, heavy, but not numerous flakes were still descending. My hostess implored of me not to think of starting under such circumstances; "there was a spare bed for me, papa will be so angry when he knows it," were all urged in vain, for young fools are often fond of making heroes of themselves, and even sometimes hope that a reckless assumption of indifference to danger will cause them to obtain the reputation of courage.

A long plank, the landing-place for boats when the water was open, jutted out into the lake. So anxious was Miss —— to prevent my going, that in spite of snow and thin shoes she followed me to it, for from there I intended starting on my cheerless journey.

"Good-bye, it's all right, there's no danger," were my parting reassurances, and I struck out into the darkness and the storm. As scarcely an inch of snow lay upon the ice, I got on famously at first, and soon drew near the two islands, the narrow channel between which I intended to pass through. Although only a short space of time had passed since I started, a complete change had come over the appearance of the weather, for the wind had commenced to rise and sough dismally, and the snow to fall in blinding quantities. I might have turned back, but a monitor within whispered shame upon such cowardice, so I

braced myself and determined to carry out my original intention. My speed was now necessarily slower, so between the two islands I entered, feeling less plucky and a good deal more uncertain as to the issue. I had nearly cleared them to strike out for the open water when to my left a lucifee howled in his most dismal unearthly manner. This animal's voice was not familiar to me then, and it terrified me to such an extent that but for the greatest mental and physical exertion I should have broken down through fear, for I believed such a weird-like note could only come from a supernatural being. After overcoming the first shock, my strength returned, and fear gave me an additional impetus to renew my speed; but I had not gone far when the same wild cry echoed from my right. Alloway Kirk and a thousand other ghost scenes flitted before me, and I fairly flew to escape the locality that Satanic beings had evidently selected for their revelry.

But the storm had increased, the wind lifted the loose snow and heaved it about in wild fantastic drifts, and the big descending flakes rushed before the impetuous blast. Fifty yards I could not see before me, yes, often not half that distance, but onwards, onwards I struggled, hoping my course was right, praying that I should not by chance be directing my steps to the haunted islands. I skated and

skated, slackened my pace from pure exhaustion, renewed my efforts with desperate will, again to slacken them for want of power of endurance. Hours must have passed thus, and I was becoming reconciled, careless of results, when something dark loomed before me; scarcely had I observed this when I fell forward. Gathering myself together I hesitated whether to rise or not, when the same looming dark outline presented itself. With a great effort I found I could move; slowly I dragged myself on towards what I knew not; more I cannot tell from memory, for the next twenty-four hours are a day of my life for which I have got credit, but was deprived of the power to use.

In a comfortable room I found myself; it was in the residence of the Methodist missionary, living at the Indian village of Rama. How I had come there was in this way. The good old clergyman could not sleep from the howling of the tempest without, so the night had passed till about four in the morning, when he was alarmed by hearing some heavy substance fall against his door. Ever on the alert to do good, and believing that it might be one of his flock who required aid, he rushed down-stairs to ascertain, and there found the writer insensible, and many a week passed before he was able to find his way back to Orillia.

Not long after came the news that every proba-



bility existed that England should go to war with Russia. Day and night I could not rest, "for I longed to follow to the field some warlike chief," so I quitted the calm shores of Lake Couchachin, and continued travelling eastward till I reached the land of my birth, little then believing, still hoping, that I should again see the "Lady of the Lake."

I have now been at Orillia for several days, but intend leaving to-morrow: during that time I have visited several of my old haunts, and had a few hours pike fishing. My companion is the first person whom I have recognised, although time has made a wonderful change in his appearance. He is a Chipewa Indian, who was frequently a hunting companion in days gone by, and at that period considered the best trapper of his village. But drink, that curse of the Red-man, has made him prematurely aged, and his formerly steady hand that could handle the rifle with such precision, now shakes like an aspen leaf. I asked him on the first day we met about his sister Margaret, who, when I formerly resided here, was the belle of all the Red-skin beauties, a veritable Pocahontas. Old Joe promised that I should see her on the morrow. I almost wish I had not now—for I would have much preferred to live in the memory of her charms than to renew her acquaintance if she has suffered cruel and forbidding alterations.

Of all races in the world that I know of, the women of none change so rapidly as the Indians, and an old squaw is actually hideous.

But Margaret came across to see me—doubtless visions of some loose change floating before her eyes had caused her to be so prompt in her attention, I thought, when she entered the room. For my part I never would have recognised her; but after a long and careful survey, in which she carefully examined my hand for an old scar, she quietly sat down upon a chair, all the time keeping her eyes fixed upon me. After a lengthened pause, pointing with her witch-like claw, she said, “Yes, that is the white boy—the same that live long, long ago, at Sugar Maple Point.” Money, to my surprise, she refused to accept; but a resplendent Brummagem trinket she carried away, appearing to be made the happiest woman in the world by the gift. Next morning her brother brought me a beautiful mink skin, skilfully tanned and dressed, and worth ten such baubles as I had given her as a present. I was ashamed to accept so handsome a gift; but all that I could say would not argue him into receiving remuneration for it. So, in this instance, I had judged my old acquaintance wrongly.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHILE paddling along the upper shore of the lake about two miles beyond Sugar Maple Point, where I had previously resided, I turned the canoe's head inshore, to point out to Joe the scene of an episode that nearly cost me my life. The place, however, was much changed; for when I saw it last it was only a neglected clearing, here and there brush asserting a position. Now it was overrun with a dense growth of maple and birch, laced and locked together with creepers of every kind indigenous to the country. Doubtless a favourite cover with game, but the very deuce for a white man to be obliged to force his way through.

The story was this. On a lovely autumnal afternoon—and none who have not seen them can imagine the beauty of such localities in all the gorgeousness of scarlet, pink, gold, and green with which the

vegetable world is here clothed, and its magnificence as well as harmony when a bright sun lights up the landscape in the fall of the year — I and an Indian lad, little over twelve years of age, left my residence to try a pair of hounds that had lately been presented me. After coasting about three quarters of a mile, a wood-chuck being observed upon a stump, we both landed from the birch-bark with the hope of being able to unearth the marmot and make him a prize. The only weapon we had with us was an axe, and although with its assistance we rapidly enlarged the burrow, still on further investigation we found it was so deep that our efforts were certain to result in failure, if limiting ourselves to daylight, so it was determined to give the task up. While resting before re-embarking, both of us heard the half grunt, half bleat of a buck; immediately the lad ran off for the hounds who were in the canoe, and with them we struck into the bush in the direction from whence proceeded the deer's challenge note. The sharp eyes of the Indian were not long in discovering a fresh trail. Uncoupling the dogs, they did not require being laid on, but stooped at once to the trail and went off at racing pace, alarming the sleeping echoes by the deep cadence of their mellow voices. Cheerier notes I never listened to,

for their producers were of a race now nearly extinct, whose deep chests and heavy flews produced a music that would drown the voice of a whole pack of ordinary fox-hounds. Hoping that the buck would take the water after half a dozen rounds of his favourite haunts, generally the last and most successful *ruse* to throw out persistent pursuers, we entered the canoe and paddled from shore a few hundred yards. But the decrease in the distinctness of the voices of the hounds proclaimed that the hunt was leaving our vicinity, so we coasted for over a mile in the required direction. This step received its reward, for we were evidently again abreast of the dogs, who seemed to be at fault ; for although their voices were none the less sonorous, still the notes were not repeated as frequently. "There the deer, there," called my companion, and following the direction indicated by his hand, a head and gallant pair of antlers could be seen stealing smoothly, and without an effort, over the surface of the unruffled lake. Not awaiting, as we should have done, for the game to get well away from land, we immediately gave chase, and as few animals swim faster than deer, the wary creature turned for shore the moment it observed us, and we had the satisfaction, if such it can be called, of getting within a few yards of its nut-brown flanks as its feet grounded, a few rapid plunges carrying it on shore, when it

disappeared into the jungle. The hounds, who had been attracted to the beach by our shouts and cheers, as each encourage the other to renewed, and, if possible, more powerful exertion in propelling the canoe, almost mobbed the buck, but being an old stager he managed to avoid their onslaught.

Again we paddled out a few hundred yards from shore, the better to command a view of the coast line, for we still had an absurd idea that the quarry, after his first experience, might be induced again to take water. Youth and inexperience are the only excuses that can be urged for such ignorance in venerie. The monotony of our position began to get irksome, when I perceived an object nearly half a mile off, that looked like a piece of charred timber floating on the water. Close observation disclosed to me that it moved, and advancing in its direction over half the intermediate space revealed a wake, and the species of animal that made it.

“Oh for a gun!” I exclaimed; “what would I not give for a gun!”

“You steer,” said the boy; “I kill him with the axe.”

“No, I will; you steer; I have twice the strength that you have, and you can handle the canoe better than me,” I hurriedly said to the lad.



So I got the axe and placed it handy beside me, and knitting my teeth, dipped the paddle deep, and we drove our light craft skimming over the lake.

I did not much like my task. I would have given anything to have changed my weapon for a gun ; but show the white feather before that little grinning fiend behind me, who would not have halted for even thought, supposing the danger had been twice as great—no ! never ! But a few yards divided us now. I carefully laid my paddle on one side ; my hands were hot and trembling from the unusual exertion, so I reached both for an instant into the cool water and took the axe, having got my legs under me so as to be able to get on my feet in an instant. Bruin did not like us ; his lip curled, and his eye looked back towards us, but he did not deviate in his course.

“ Are you ready, boy ? ”

“ Am,” grunted the young savage.

“ Then give way,” I said ; and he did, for the canoe shot forward as a sleigh over the smoothest ice-track.

One, two, three. I am within striking distance. Slowly I raise myself ; the heavy blade describes a circle over my right shoulder, and comes down with a swing that would have felled a bull, a crunch as of the pulverising of bones telling that my exertion has not been fruitless ; but the power with which I struck

threw the canoe off her balance; so to save an upset I dropped the axe overboard—yes, overboard. I had not time to do otherwise, for but a moment postponed our immersion: but it was only for a moment, for the bear, when it received the stroke, turned over and placed one of its paws upon the gunwale. We were unarmed, and therefore unable to cut his hold adrift, and in a moment our cockle-shell was floating bottom upmost, with the paddles, bear, and ourselves bobbing up and down around it like the cork floats of a net full of large fish. Fortunately, Bruin was satisfied with the mischief he had done, or felt too weak to attempt further hostilities, so made for shore, leaving us to hang to our craft, the most obstreperous of all its race when it gets an opportunity of this kind to make itself disagreeable. However, after some exertion we got it righted, and the lad got inside while I held on by the stern, the young Indian soon after paddling into shoal water. Next day the bear was found in the last agonies preceding death, and prime as both pelt and carcase were, I doubt if I should like to go through the same escape to obtain their superior, let alone their equal.

Joe, who listened attentively to all I said, only indicating his presence by a grunt of approval, exclaimed as soon as I had finished:

"That all true; that just so. I know who was with you that day; he often tell me all about it; he old Snake's son. You remember old chief Snake—live in next big house to missionaries' in Rama?"

No, I could not remember my companion's name, and I told him so.

"Well, that no matter. Old Snake son, I tell you. Old Snake still alive," then turning very serious in features and solemn in voice, "but Jim dead—dead now long time; he all the same as brother to me, and best hunter we then have. Yes, he all the same as brother to me."

"How did he die, Joe?"

"Oh, ordinary way; nothing funny in him's death." (He doubtless meant peculiar.) "Him coming home from fall hunt one stormy night; wind blow very hard; so top of pine-tree snap right off and fall on him. Suppose you come to Rama, I show you him's squaw and sons."

I should have taken Joe with me on my intended journey if he had been as formerly, but his love of whisky had shattered his constitution, and prematurely he had become an old man. He begged hard to go, but I told him firmly but not unkindly it could not be. With tears almost in his eyes, he kissed my hand at parting, exclaiming to himself, "That whisky kill

me; you afraid I drink too much—that why you no take me with you.”

I feel convinced—well, I would not take away the poor fellow’s character without cause—that I saw him enter a grog-shop as the train rolled out of the station, in which he doubtlessly got roaring drunk in ten minutes, and did not leave till all his hard-earned money was spent. Alas, the poor Indian! he is like a child—more helpless in fact—for he cannot control his longings if in his power to gratify them.

At Collingwood I found, as I had been informed I should, several families of Indians belonging to the North, far up beyond Muskoka Lake, ready to depart for their hunting-grounds. They had been down here to trade, and supply themselves with necessaries for carrying on the winter hunt.

With few exceptions they were the poorest, most miserable-looking lot that I had ever previously seen, and it was quite evident that they had indulged in a heavy drinking bout, as long as the means to supply the needful lasted. I was quite discouraged and very nearly changing my destination for Minnesota, when a circumstance arose to induce me to adhere to my original plan.

Many of the storekeepers with whom the Indians had dealt, I asked for information regarding them,

whether they knew them, where they came from, and more important still, whether they thought they were to be trusted. To all of these queries I got most unsatisfactory answers, for their conduct since they had come to the town had been one scene of drunkenness; moreover, that they were all strangers, and had never been there before. The keeper of one store I had visited several times had a remarkably kindly expression, with a soft laughing eye, and was less severe upon the unfortunate Red-skins than any of his neighbours. In his shop I had on two occasions seen a sun-burnt, short hairy man, either lolling about or sitting upon a flour-barrel. His manner was evidently that of a person out at elbows, and very anxious to get something to do. I saw that he eyed me closely, and believe he wished me to enter into conversation with him, which I did not, preferring the advances to come from him. At length one morning I entered the store, and while speaking to the host, the stranger came in, respectfully listened to our conversation, and at its finish told me that he was both a trapper and lumberman, had followed either one or other, or both if circumstances permitted, and would be happy to join me if we could arrange terms. As a further inducement he told me he knew the locality I wished to go to, but that if I would deviate more to the left he could take me to most admirable

winter quarters—winter quarters situated in the very best moose, cariboo, and bear country in Canada.

I listened quietly to all he had to say, and then asked him if he had a character, or could he mention any one that could vouch for his good behaviour.

No, he had not; he might have had doubtless if he had ever thought such was necessary, but he had lived beyond settlements where he could always get his living independent of any one, unless he went lumbering, when the boss of a gang had only to see how he could handle an axe for five minutes, or drive a yoke of cattle, and he was bound sure to give him best wages.

I knew that what he stated was more than probably true, so I told him to think over what arrangements we could make for the winter, possibly for a year, and let me know on the morrow.

In the mean time I made numerous inquiries about this man, but no person knew him; all that they could say was, that he had come from the West in the steam-boat, a week or two since, had paid his score where he lodged, and had conducted himself in such a manner as not to have become objectionable to any one.

His first demand on the morrow was fifty dollars a month, a winter fit-out, and permission to trade on his own account.



After such a proposal I told him that it was unnecessary to broach the subject any more, so he left.

In a few hours he returned, and said he would be satisfied with half the amount of money ; but even with this deduction I refused to engage him.

Again he departed, the nonchalance of his manner being diplomatic to perfection.

But next morning he was announced again. He didn't come to talk business, only to learn how I was getting on ; was willing to give me any information I wanted, took a glass of grog and a cigar, of course, at my request, and regretted extremely that we were not at the other end of Lake Superior, for he could take me from there into the best hunting-ground in the world, bar none. The impudent assurance of this man was his greatest attraction. In the Indian country of the far West I have met many of his stamp, but he beat them all. If coolness and decision would rescue any man from the just penalty of his rascality, then this one was sure to escape.

After imbibing his glass of whisky, he spoke much more freely, and less guardedly than before—for one glass of spirits has double the effect upon persons who spend the greater portions of their lives where it is not to be obtained—and I learned as I supposed that he had traversed the plains and seen Mexico, spent a winter in the Rocky Mountains, and had

lived hail-fellow-well-met for indefinite periods with the Sioux, some distance north of Fort Edminton. He was really very amusing now, and his society did not bore me in the least, so I listened with pleasure to yarn after yarn, which I believed true, because there was a probability about them, and a knowledge of the persons and places who figured in them, that it was impossible for an uneducated man to conceive.

Still I made no allusion to his accompanying me.

At length, when a spirit of *bon camaraderie* appeared to be thoroughly established, he again broached the all-important subject, by saying:

“Captain, I’m darned if I would not like to go with you ; name your own terms, and, if reasonable, I’ll go with you.”

I had expected this turn to take place, so was not at fault but determined to make him an offer, believing, as an additional inducement, that his yarns would help to kill time very pleasantly of a long, lone winter night.

“I’ll give you a first-class winter outfit, provide you with food the same as my own, find you in ammunition, traps, &c. You can keep the pelt of all the game you kill, you can trade on your own account as long as you treat the Indians fairly, and I will supply you with articles to do so to the amount

of thirty dollars store price ; and if you behave fairly with me, I'll give you every assistance to get your goods out when I break up camp ; in return for this I am to be boss (head of the party), you are to cut up the firewood, and do a fair share of work either in canoe paddling, camp keeping, shanty building, and packing home game. But if you should break your contract, or I should desire to be rid of your society on account of bad behaviour, before three months are up, then you shall only retain your winter kit, and obtain from me such provisions and ammunition as will suffice to bring you back to civilisation, retaining also the furs you have trapped in the interim."

This, after some demur, was agreed to, so I had a fac-simile drawn out, attested by witnesses, and to which he attached the sign of a cross, for he could not write. Antoine Fortier, however, was his name.

I having settled thus much, despatched him among the Indians, who left in a day or two, to learn particulars of their destination, and whether, if we joined them, for a liberal remuneration, they would pack my goods as far as our routes continued together.

Alone I should have hesitated to trust myself among these miserable people, now that I had a white companion I felt that such a course, although possibly still possessing risk, the chances were very much lessened.

Among the Indians I had noticed a bright, pleasant-faced, half-starved, almost entirely unclothed boy, about fourteen years of age. His miserable state I could not help regretting, so I gave him a few coppers when chance threw him in my way. Among his people he appeared to be without friends, and, consequently, the drudge of all.

One bitter bleak morning I met him at the tavern door; he appeared to cower under the cold blast, and so forlorn and destitute did he look, that compassion for his situation took strong possession of me. So I asked the little one into the kitchen and gave the lad a regular blow out, very much to the disgust of the low dirty Irish Biddy who operated as cook, and whom, thank goodness, I had not seen before, or my appetite would have been much lessened. Talk of English schoolboys eating, the most voracious of them would not have been a patch upon my *protégé*. And mind, his food was none of your cakes, buns, blanc-manges, and that kind of finikin stuff, but regular solid, hard substantial grub. In very truth, I stood and wondered where on earth such a skillagaree could stow it all; however, I did not hurry him, but waited patiently till he said enough, and nearly choked over the effort.

Well, I took quite a liking to that boy, not on account of the powers of digestion he had exhibited, but

—and who would not that felt as they ought to do?—on account of his desolate wretched condition, and that at an age when everything should be the reverse, so that in the trials of after life he might be able to look back to a bright period in his existence.

After a debate in my mind, selfish, no doubt, for I balanced the advantages and disadvantages of having such an attachment to my retinue, the wind played an additional hornpipe round the window-sill of my bedroom, and the fireless apartment looked more cheerless, and I shivered; that shiver recalled the memory of the poor boy out-doors, and the milk of human kindness rapidly increased within me, and I resolved to ask the little fellow to go with me, to share alike with me, but possibly, yes, possibly, have to go on short commons; but under any circumstances to be kindly treated and suitably clothed.

So, in the afternoon I broached the circumstance to him, when his face lit up with joy.

“Go, would he go with me?”

“Yes, anywhere.”

“Whose permission should I ask?”

“No one care for me—got no friend.”

Still I considered it right to ask the members of the camp where he slept. All responded:

“Him was no use. Father dead, mother dead, him die next winter, nobody care about him.”

So I took him there and then, found a place in the barn for him to sleep, a large buffalo robe to wrap around him, and next morning provided him with cheap certainly, but warm clothing.

“And no one could see why I should take the slightest interest in the ugly little brat.” These were almost the verbatim words that several professing Christians said to me.

As master and employer I did not consider that it behoved me to mention the matter to Antoine; soon, however, he found it out, and was very wroth. After a few common-place remarks on the subject, to which I responded little, he angrily commenced:

“Why hamper ourselves with a dirty, unwashed, filthy, good-for-nothing, Red-skin spawn like that?”

“Because I wish it.”

“But you are a fool to be imposed upon; the whole expedition will be spoilt.”

Searching among my letters I found the agreement; holding it up, I said:

“I suppose you wish to break this contract, if so, it is easily torn up and thrown in the fire.”

“No, no, I don’t mean that,” he exclaimed.

“Well, then, if you intend keeping it, know once and for all that I am boss, and will not be dictated to by you or any one else. I have letters to write and would be alone.”



Smirking and smiling he retired, protesting all the time that I misunderstood him. Well, it may be better that I did, for from that date it put an end to any doubts who was commanding officer.

In the morning Antoine visited me; he was all good nature, and adhered to his former statement, that I misunderstood him, that what he had said was dictated by regard for my interest, afterwards informing me that he had made arrangements with the Indians to take my baggage to what he considered a splendid hunting-ground, and at a price which appeared to me very reasonable.

Then the morrow was fixed for the start.

Taking my *protégé* and Skye with me, for the latter now condescended to regard me as master, we took our way to the former's late camp. Its inhabitants were about to start north-west in a couple of days. With envy they seemed to regard their late *attaché*, on account, doubtless, of his new clothes, which certainly neither fitted nor became him; but when we bid them good-bye, not a word of regret was expressed at his departure.

Poor lad! terrible would have been his fate among them if they had run short of provisions, too young and without means of providing food for himself, they would have driven him forth in the wilderness to die of starvation.

## CHAPTER V.

THE first four days of our journey was performed on foot. Besides the small packs Antoine, the boy, and myself carried, we had about two and a half hundredweight divided among the Indians, made up in loads of about fifty pounds each. These I took no more supervision of than to see that they left in the morning and were delivered up at night. The weather was cool and bracing, and with the exception of the first two days, when the walking was wet and very boggy under foot, the ground was firm and free from other impediments than fallen timber, and where the forest was not dense, occasional clumps of brush. As far as my judgment went, I should say that a good seventy miles laid between us and Collingwood. So far I had done no hunting, for the very reason that I determined, until all were got into thorough working order, pleasure should be sacrificed to busi-

ness, and any attempt on my part to set a different example would have been demoralising in the extreme, and likely to result in the subversion of discipline.

I have forgotten to add that, before quitting civilisation, almost at the last house upon its outskirts, I purchased from a squatter, farmer, or whatever you choose to call him, another dog, a thorough cur in shape, if my judgment be not erroneous. I was tempted to become the owner from the lowness of price asked and the good looks of the intelligent putative mother, who was unquestionably a veritable *bonâ fide* colley. The sire I could learn nothing of—doubtless some stray Indian cur.

Never having had a previous knowledge of such a cross, I hoped that the animal would turn out a perfect treasure. If his excellence ever equals the difficulty there was in catching him, and retaining when caught, never was better value received for a five dollar bill. For safe custody he was intrusted to the care of my Indian lad, who was much delighted with the responsibility of so valuable a charge.

The first two days I noticed that they had occasional differences of opinion ; latterly dislike seems to have retired in favour of friendship, and if such a

happy state of affairs continues a day or two longer, Poteen, for so I have named him on account of the whisky-loving physiognomy of his late owner, will be released from leading strings and permitted to pick his own way. Skye evinces an inveterate dislike to him, so do the three or four curs belonging to the Indians; doubtless before long his interest will tell him who should be propitiated, for there are two distinct cliques among the canines, the Scotch element and the Indian, and although the former is very much in the minority numerically, if ever actual hostilities break out, I would lay my money upon the Gael.

Anxiety for the first night or two after getting under way, operated upon me much in the same manner as upon the sailor getting clear of land, so my sleep was far from sound or refreshing; not so now, for I have scarcely finished my doch-an-darras pipe when I am in the arms of Morpheus, little Skye cuddling up, head and tail fashion, on my warmest side, and so watchful is he that not a soul can approach my dormitory without his giving alarm.

Antoine he is not partial to—a bowing acquaintance he certainly has with him, but nothing more. The Indians he refuses to acknowledge at any price; even as to his food, he expects to receive it from me; ordi-

nary well-picked bones, such as generally fall to a dog's lot, from other hands he would not deign to touch, unless Poteen or one of the Indian curs cast a longing eye upon it, then ideas of providing for the morrow seem to strike him, when gingerly picking up the despised morsel, on three legs, with extra turn in his tail he will trot off pompously into the bush and secrete it. Bless you, he's far too aristocratic to be selfish ; possibly, who knows, but that he thinks that the scraps he treats thus, by the half-starved *canaille* that happen for the present time to be his fellow-travellers would be unappreciated.

The fifth night we encamped upon a beautiful dry knoll covered with beech, maple, and birch, just such a rise of ground as in some future day will be selected for the site of a farm-house, from whence the country for miles around can be overlooked. As far as I can form an opinion without breaking the soil, the great difficulty the agriculturalist will have to contend with at first, on settling in this neighbourhood, will be the quantity of stone scattered over the surface. The soil itself appears remarkably good, and especially suitable for the cultivation of potatoes, hops, beans, barley, or oats ; but I fear it is too northern a climate for wheat to become a staple crop.

The first wolves that have yet been heard, sere-

naded us to-night; there must have been half a dozen in the troupe. Their feelings were certainly suffering from some grievous wrong, if the volume and mournfulness of their notes are to be taken as an index. Of course, the Indian dogs could not resist the inducement of chiming in the chorus; even Skye followed suit, a clear case of a prince fiddling among professionals; however, I overlooked the matter and did not censure him, as it is the first time that my dog has forgotten to be a gentleman.

Turning out soon after daybreak, although the water was icy cold I could not resist the temptation of taking a bath; however, a couple of minutes under a shower of spray sufficed, the reaction making my skin the colour of a boiled lobster; but after I got thoroughly dried and dressed, I felt I had energy to undertake any mortal thing. An old Indian, while I underwent my ablutions, sat upon a bank wrapped in silent wonder; when finished, he rose silently, uttered a single word and walked away; that word, when translated, meant lunatic. A woman that once professed to love me very much, used frequently to call me the same; from her mouth I considered it a term of endearment. It is this metamorphosing the use of words in our language that causes its difficulty of comprehension to foreigners.



Our route to-day is north-east, so I determine to leave the trail and proceed north for two or three hours, then work eastward by north. When all were started on the line of march I struck off into the forest, half a dozen ball, and a couple of dozen shot cartridges in my pockets, and Skye at my heels. The little iron-grey beauty evidently had been in the society of a gun before, for he hunted the cover around me with all the energy and industry of a spaniel. Soon I found a family of ruffed grouse, out of which I killed a brace, so frequently afterwards repeating the performance that I soon had as many as I felt disposed to carry. Deer tracks were extremely numerous, but I had not seen their producers; this might have been caused by my devoting myself entirely to the pursuit of the smaller game, or their being frightened by the occasional sharp bark of my dog. However I was not destined long to be denied the honour, for under a beech-tree, evidently picking up mast, I perceived a doe. Substituting ball for shot, I tried to stalk her, but Skye became excited and would not keep to heel, so lost me the shot. A little longer acquaintance with my new companion, and I feel certain, from his intelligent countenance, that he will see the necessity of prompt and thorough attention to my wishes.

Two hours, possibly a little more, I had travelled so far east by north, that I soon looked forward to striking the trail of my party. When crossing a fallen tree, around which a tangle of briers had grown, a fawn of the past spring jumped up almost under my feet and bounded off. It was a nice clear easy shot, and when about thirty-five yards off I tumbled it literally in its own track.

Taking the heart and liver, I pursued my way, breaking every fifty yards a branch from a tree, or limb from bush, to mark my course; in half an hour afterwards I struck the trail, where, leaving a bough, I hurried after the baggage party. About half-past three I overtook them preparing to camp for the night on the margin of one of the most charming little lakes I ever remember to have seen.

Its bosom was as calm as glass, not a ripple to be seen unless when a loon or fish broke water. On its placid surface reposed three picturesque rocky islands covered densely with coniferous and deciduous trees, birch preponderating among the latter, their feathery aerial limbs in many situations drooping down till they almost kissed the water.

A couple of months ago, when the foliage was in all the gorgeous colouring of autumn, this sequestered spot must have looked like fairyland, for even under

present circumstances, with all the larger hardwood trees denuded of foliage, and a cold leaden sky overhead, it looked enchanting.

An old squaw and one of the younger Indians were sent back for the fawn ; they returned about half-past six, looking very much knocked up by their additional exertion. In our camp there was feasting that night, and it was very late, I think past midnight, before the *gourmets* ceased from banqueting.

Day broke wet and miserable ; the shirker of exposure would have refused to turn out, and there was an obvious intention manifested to adopt a similar course, but I pretended not to see it, and by bustling about soon shamed into activity the indolently disposed.

The season was already so late that it was absolutely necessary to push on, for although I expected to be overtaken by winter before reaching our destination, still the nearer we got to it before that took place the better ; moreover, this was our last march on foot, for our next camping ground was on the margin of a river where the canoes of our party are secreted.

There are few things more disagreeable than a march through woodland, where not only the ground is saturated with moisture, but every limb supports

globules of water; to brush against them you cannot avoid, and the moisture appears to penetrate further when thus come in contact with, than the rain itself. Our tramp was such a spiritless affair from these depressing influences that it very much resembled a funeral procession, and scarcely a word was spoken till the sun burst forth about mid-day, his influence on the energy of all being truly remarkable.

Poteen has been permitted to run at large; he evinces a great disposition to hunt, but objects slightly to the report of a gun; some game killed in his presence will doubtless soon get him over this very worst of faults.

Of all curs, and I have an intense dislike to the race, I never saw such a despicable lot as accompany our Indians, one in particular, a scanty, irregular-clothed, sharp-nosed, prick-eared, diminutive, starved brute. Inquiring from his owner why he kept such a miserable wretch, only fit to be shot, he answered "that he was the best bear, porcupine, and bird dog that they had." After this conversation half an hour had scarcely passed, when there was a sound to our right of a worry going on; immediately a stampede was made to see the cause, your humble servant leading the race. We were not long kept in doubt, for there was the dog whose character I had so ruthlessly

attempted to take away, pitching into a porcupine much heavier than himself. The victim somehow or other the cur had turned upon its back, rendering its armour of spines useless, at the same time exposing the vulnerable stomach and chest, on which the assailant's tusks were busily engaged. After the battle was finished the plucky little vixen had not a wound. I'll bet no English dog would have come off scathless from such a contest.

My *protégé*, I must not forget to say, has changed very much in appearance. The first and most noticeable indication of improvement in health, is his skin, which has become moist and bright, instead of dry and scaly as formerly. There is nothing in the Indian races of North America that more surely denotes their state of health than their hide. The lad also has much improved in spirits, and his formerly expressionless eye has become bright and observant. Although he carries a pack I have taken good care that he should not be overloaded, and so little does he now regard it, that he and Poteen are ever to be found about the van of the column.

For a mile before we had reached the anticipated river the coniferous trees rapidly commenced to give place to hardwoods, which gradually became less and less abundant till we stood upon its banks. A noble

stream truly it is, made up of rapids, pools, and reaches, with its course frequently divided my miniature islands.

The respective loads being deposited on the site that we were to camp, while the majority were employed erecting a shelter, collecting firewood, or cooking, four of the men departed to look for their canoes, which were hid in a swamp some distance off.

Next morning, about two hours after sunrise they returned, each paddling a birch-bark sufficiently large to carry six persons with comfort. As exposure to the atmosphere had made all of them leak more or less, the remainder of the day was spent caulking, refitting new ribs, or sewing up rents. The ingenuity of the workmen and skill with which they perform their task being truly wonderful.

Having taken a rough observation of the course of the river, I struck off into the bush. Deer tracks wherever the soil was sufficiently soft to show the impression of the animals' hoofs, were most abundant. Before I had walked above two or three miles I saw several, but they were evidently shy, either from having heard the voices or chopping of my people, or smelt the smoke from the camp-fires. At length, however, I came across half a dozen together; two



were standing, the others lying down. One of the former, a well-fed, large and restless-looking doe, appeared to be guard to the party, and as some minutes elapsed before I was within range, her uneasiness alarmed all and caused them to gain their feet.

It could not be the wind that had warned them, for it was blowing from them to me, but some limb I had trod on, the sound of which breaking unnoticed by myself, had been detected by their sensitive hearing.

The watchful doe, who was apparently in the prime condition, was the first I took sight at. At the report she sprung into the air, staggered forward about twenty paces and fell; the second barrel fired at the rearmost of the now retreating family party was less successful, for the quarry went off, hit I believe; for few are inclined to acknowledge even to themselves that they have made a really bad shot.

Another morning of rain; too bad, as I desired very much to be afforded an opportunity of admiring the grand scenery which I feel convinced guards this river on either side, for it is impossible that such a lovely picture as rapids, pools, reaches, and islands, could be without a fitting setting. However, I must not grumble, things might be worse, moreover rain must fall, however objectionable it may occasionally

be, particularly to those that are without shelter ; fine dry weather is certainly delightful, but an uninterrupted succession of it would soon play mischief with the vegetable world, and what then would become of the animal kingdom ?

One might as well expect the year to glide away without bad weather, as to pass through life without a rub of adversity—they both do good you may rely upon it, and the easiest way to feel their stings less poignant is to think so.

An advantage that canoe travelling possesses over walking, is that you can muffle yourself up so as to escape a great deal of the drift, and you are not constantly saluted with boughs loaded with moisture, that appear to imagine their express duty to be to re-christen you, and this they do with no niggardly hand.

But as before, at noon the sun exhibited his jolly roseate face, the fog momentarily after became thinner, and that that would not be absorbed politely floated off, doubtless with the hope of escaping destruction, a hope not to be realised.

Talk of laughing waters, here they were in perfection ; and so infectious became their example that both canoes and passengers followed the example as we glided, bounded, staggered, and again rushed onwards.

It was a wild reckless race: the canoes, although handicapped with a freight, still striving whether they could beat the rapids in their velocity past rocks, driftwood, and trees. The Indians looked happy, the dogs pleased, and I felt an exuberance of spirit, a freedom from restraint, a recklessness of danger that was truly delightful.

At three hours by sun we had gone a long way, and the river, which now had become exhausted, and therefore sluggish from its former exertions, increased much in breadth. Our paddles appearing to be handled with scarcely the former energy, I thought of calling a halt, when a turn of a tree-clad point of land revealed the broad expanded surface of a lake, a sea almost in size; and scarcely had I made this discovery ere our prows were turned to shore, the cargoes were rapidly transferred to the beach, and every one of the party became engaged in endeavouring to unravel some most intricate knot his limbs had got twisted into while sitting in the bottom of the canoe.

Towards evening I took a stroll. Ruffed grouse appeared everywhere. So abundant were they, that if I was not aware that they did not migrate, I should have thought they had assembled for that purpose. Yes, this country is well stocked with game, and that

fellow knows it, and has profited by his knowledge—a bald-headed eagle—or he would not be sitting there so indolently with his cruel, relentless, vindictive eyes fixed on me, although not more than a hundred yards sever us. I had a great mind to put a bullet in a barrel and tumble him from his perch—you see two of a trade seldom agree—but didn't. I suppose the knowledge that he was first in possession of this demesne, and thus had a prior claim, prevented me.

A bleak cold camp, and a sleepless night, did not make me feel either good-tempered or anxious for exertion; but the Indians are up and doing, a heavy, dark, drop-curtain of a cloud rising in the north stimulating them to renewed vigour to reduce the distance between themselves and home. If I am any judge of the weather—which I am not—it will snow before long.

Striking across a wide bay, we soon caught a nice stiff breeze, such as amateur sailors—such gentlemen, I mean, as the expression is rather ambiguous, who wear blue reefing-jackets and white flannel trousers, canvas shoes and loud-patterned shirts, straw hats with blue ribbon, on which are emblazoned feminine names in gold letters, who prefer belts to braces, although half their time is occupied in tugging their

nether apparel up to prevent it from falling down—yes, just such a breeze as they would designate a gale when they got on shore and joined the society of cousins Lou and Florence, or chat with those charming *distingué* girls (*sotto voce* let me say their father was once a mute, but has lately amassed a fortune as an undertaker). The young ladies simper and look incredulous, for there has scarcely been a breath of wind on shore ; however, they are reminded that the most severe gales are local ; the late experience of the gallant amateurs is undoubtedly an instance of it, and from that moment Jones and Smith are heroes.

I am afraid there is a tinge of satire in what I have just said ; if there is not, I intend it, for between ourselves—it need not go any further you know—for a whole week I had been paying most devoted attention to such a nice girl, told her all my best stories, discussed typhoons, cyclones, and hurricanes, adventures among niggers, Malay pirates, and South Sea Islanders—in fact, taken her all over the world, in imagination of course, and introduced her to every rock, nook, or cranny that I had ever visited, and would you believe it—I am certain you will not unless I back it up with strong language—by jingo ! she cut me for such an amateur sailor as I have so

feebly attempted to describe, and by Jove, I had almost forgotten to add, the fellow wore an eye-glass!

With dirty blankets hoisted on paddles to do the duty of sails, we skimmed over the water right merrily, and by night had made double the distance we anticipated, and during the whole day not a flake of snow fell. It would pay a fellow to keep me, if it was a matter of consequence for him to know beforehand how the weather was going to be, for he would be certain to be right if he backed the reverse to what I predicted.

From our present camp we have a portage of three miles; the canoes of course have to be carried across, so a day will be lost in the performance.

I went over with the first load after breakfast, and having backed across a pack of fifty pounds weight, considered myself entitled to the remainder of the day, so I started down the stream on which we embark on the morrow. Not more than half a mile had I proceeded when I surprised a doe moose swimming across from my side to the other. As she had not seen me and I was close, I found time to alter my shot for ball. With the first barrel I hit her very hard, so hard that she floundered heavily; but still I think had sufficient go left to get off, so I put in the second at the moment she gained her footing before reaching the shore. On



receiving the ball the poor thing roached her back so high that she appeared unable to get her feet to the ground ; a few steps she moved forward, then fell upon her head against the bank. Having now enough fresh meat and to spare, I sauntered back to camp, and spent the afternoon gun cleaning, washing clothes, and darning socks. Although thus employed I could not help observing the immense quantities of wild-fowl following up the course of the river ; as their flight was high they were doubtlessly migrating south.

Antoine I see very little of, my appearance or manner evidently have not favourably impressed him, so we seldom exchange above half a dozen words at a time ; still that does not prevent my noticing that he looks sulky and far from amicable in frame of mind. At the same time I will do him the credit to say, he never shirks his work, or gives me any occasion to find fault.

This evening he informed me that to-morrow we shall be at our winter quarters, a most gratifying piece of intelligence, so all night I kept conjuring up what kind of place the site of our future home was to be.

Next evening at sunset my curiosity was satisfied, and I may add gratified. It was a comparatively

open piece of turf-covered land, sparsely covered with trees that, from the river making a bend, formed a promontory. The throat of a rapid enclosed by high rocks was above the situation I selected for the shanty, beneath was a long placid pool, fringed in places by alder and birch.

## CHAPTER VI.

IN the morning, after vainly attempting to persuade the Indians to remain a day or two longer, so that I might have their services in house building, they departed. I feel certain that the poor fellows were willing enough ; but the head man, pointing to the ducks that were still flying from the north in undiminished quantities, said :

“ Winter soon come now, and Indian got long way to go.”

After paying them they thanked me, and were evidently amply satisfied. But when they were about to go, I added a few trifling presents to what they had already received, and their gratitude was strongly expressed in looks, although in few words. I sat upon the bank and saw the last of them ; as they were disappearing round the first bend in the stream, I gave them a cheer ; long after the trees had shut them

out of sight I heard them answering. So much for the much abused race.

I felt low-spirited when I turned towards my future home. To give way to it was simply absurd, and to get rid of it there was nothing like work, so I got hold of my axe and set to cutting up and clearing away brush with a thorough goodwill.

In the mean time Antoine was constructing near at hand a very snug bush camp in case snow commenced to fall, or severe weather impeded our work. Over a respite in our labours, the size and plan of our shanty was settled, viz., twelve feet by eight, with a door at one end and a look-out hole at the other, to be kept closed except in fine weather, or when required for purposes of observation. A fireplace was not required, for we had got a stove made from sheet iron, that shut up like a pigeon trap, and several sheets of tin with solder and rosin with which to make piping. That afternoon and the next two days were employed cutting and notching logs, or rolling them with handspikes to our future building site.

Antoine I found a most skilful fellow in the use of an axe, and a perfect genius in all matters calculated to make a person feel at home in the woods in the shortest imaginable space of time.

I had been watching his deftness, while taking a

puff at my pipe, for I had been rather severely tried in rolling, as I considered, an unnecessary large log up an incline into its place, when both dogs sprung to their legs, and barking vociferously, rushed down by the bank of the river. Looking in the direction I saw an Indian approaching. Calling off Skye and Poteen the stranger came directly to us. He was a tall, well-built, very good-looking for his race, old man.

In answer to my salutation he gave a grunt, then stood leaning upon his gun for quite an hour in one position, without opening his lips, I in the mean time going about my business as if no one was there. Feeling a desire for another pipe, I pulled out my pouch, loaded up, lit it from an ember, and commenced to blow a cloud. The Indian's countenance lit up. I held the pouch towards him, he took it, filled his pipe, and sat down beside me.

At length he got up, said: "I go home, you good man, Indian say 'so,'" and turned on his heel and marched off. Give a dog a bad name, and you may hang him, give him a good one and you may let him live; so I looked now forward to not being cut off in the bloom of—I was going to say youth, but will substitute manhood.

"Well, how did that tarnation Red-skin know we were here?" inquired Antoine, after he had departed.

“Blest if I know,” I responded.

For some time my companion scratched his head and afterwards bit his nails, both actions being calculated to assist thought. In a few minutes after, having received benefit from the proceeding, he favoured me with the result.

“I guess the Indians that packed our load across, told him.”

This solution of the difficulty was the only one I could think of.

In the morning before we had finished breakfast the old chief, for so I have learned he is, turned up again, and with him two young men, each about three or four-and-twenty. When we commenced work they turned to also, and soon our structure grew rapidly under the efforts of our increased force. Little now was wanting but the roof—this they understood, and that evening we had birch bark enough to make it.

Next morning I told the old chief, who had now become a little more loquacious, that I wanted a canoe, pointing to Antoine and the boy as the number of inmates it was to carry. In the evening he left us, and the following night he arrived with exactly what I required. His companions now were two girls; judging from appearance the elder was about eighteen, the other two years younger. Their home was evi-



dently down the river, for that was the direction from whence they had come.

Two days after our roof was finished heavy snow commenced to fall, preventing all description of outdoor labour; but there was an abundance of work for all to do inside. The Indians, whom I paid liberally, for I wished to propitiate them, left; and we were again alone in our solitude.

Although some time has passed we are not yet finished in our labour, new holes are constantly being discovered in the walls that require fresh chinking, and articles of luxury, such as chairs and tables, to be rebuilt, from legs being irregular lengths, or not sufficiently firmly put together. Still the little place has assumed a home-like look, and the dogs snarl and growl at each other as if each was jealous of the comfort the other enjoyed.

Antoine has done good work and not spared himself, moreover he has become more agreeable, and does not hesitate when the humour is on him to tell of his adventures in the Rocky Mountains, of his performances in shooting buffalo and grizzlies. He had concluded a long yarn one night, and finished off by regretting that I had never visited that region. Waiting for him to quite finish, I told him I knew all about it, and had spent a long time there.

His eyes opened and continued doing so, till an observer might have imagined they objected to a bridge between them, and there and then intended to do away with it.

The Indian lad was most willing and obliging; rapidly his figure increased in size, but the way his paunch grew was something wonderful. It is certainly a useful portion of a man's body, but that is no reason it should be allowed to take liberties.

Altogether we were most comfortable, and had every reason to be grateful to Providence for having subtended to us such a succession of good luck.

Having succeeded now in making the interior weather-tight, and constructed the few articles of furniture necessary, also got the routine of our daily life into a regular groove, I consider that I am fairly entitled to take my leisure and enjoy the field sports and pleasures of a life for which I have come so far.

Already I have got a pretty good idea of the plan of the country within a mile of the shanty, and have learned that the river for upwards of ten miles runs from the south nearly due north, not making allowance for bends and elbows, so if I have the misfortune at any time to get lost on the east side of the stream, by travelling west by compass I am pretty certain to find it, and *vice versa*.

I am more than an ordinarily good hand in the woods, still I am not an Indian, and previous experience has taught me that it is better not to be too reliant on my power of finding my way, especially through dense swamp and heavily clad ridges of pine, where everything you see around you appears a perfect counterpart of what you may have passed hours before ; so at least for the present I am resolved not to go far from home without having the reliable company of my compass.

I have discovered already that, however good an axe-man Antoine is, that he is but indifferently fond of hunting, for now we are at our destination, in the middle of our preserve, he neither expresses any desire to commence the campaign against the moose and cariboo, but has even ceased to expatiate on his former exploits in their pursuit. He does not even care about accompanying me, always having the excuse that his traps must be looked to, for that trapping "make almighty more dollars than burning powder." In this there is a certain amount of truth, at the same time hunting must be done to enable us to live to carry on trapping, and it is clearly evident that my attendant expects me to supply him with food while he collects a good pack of furs for the next season's market.

Although this is quite contrary to our arrangement, still I suppose it is better to submit to the imposition. As I never expected to make money out of my trip, or even make it pay the light expenses which at most it can only incur, still, if I have a wish in the matter, and I have further the idea that such wish deserves humouring, I would rather for some time to come hunt in society than alone. Of course the Indian boy could be taken, and a clever, smart, obliging lad he is, but some person is required at the shanty when both the Frenchman and self are absent, for our evening meal has got to be prepared, and who knows some visitors might arrive when least expected, who finding no one to protect my property, consider themselves justified in appropriating to their own use what struck their fancy. I have known such things occur before, and experiences of the kind are those dearly learned lessons which ought not to be forgotten.

My Indian neighbours I am not much afraid of; they have not mixed enough with traders, or frequented the vicinity of settlements enough to have become sufficiently contaminated to be thieves, and if they did so far forget themselves, they reside so close to me that I should sooner or later discover their peccadillo, and either through the aid of a high

hand, or through the assistance of the chief, who really appears an aristocratic old fellow, be able to obtain redress.

No, it is the white trapper, trader, lumberman, or voyageur, that is to be dreaded, for very many, I won't say all that adopt these lives, are the sweepings of society. And although I hope to see none of these worthies, still there is no telling what may cause them to leave their ordinary route, and by chance pass my residence, when they would not fail to land and gratify their curiosity with a "look at the outlandish home, that some half-cracked squatter or blarsted Johnny Bull had chosen."

Well, "sufficient is the evil for the day thereof," and I have no idea, certainly no hope, to be honoured by a visit till after winter has passed by any one of my own colour.

The weather one morning being admirable for creeping, *id est*, stalking cariboo, for the snow is soft and the timber wet, I started soon after break of day to see how much luck was in store for me. On my way through the large timber I saw a great many spruce grouse, which I desisted from shooting at from a desire not to alarm the neighbourhood, and so get a fair opportunity to note what stock of large game the locality supported. I also came across the track of a very large moose, who, judging from his stride, must

have been on urgent private affairs, so I left him to his duty, only hoping that we should yet meet.

I had gone nearly three miles before I came across cariboo tracks, the first I observed being rather stale, so I disregarded them, getting by degrees into more sparsely timbered land where more and fresher indications were numerous. Pushing due east for some minutes I came out on a barren, very park-like in scenery, and well scored over with prints, so much so that it was like what might have been expected in a densely populated deer park; however, I could see no game. Knowing from past experience, if you once disturb cariboo, they go right off out of the neighbourhood, not stopping till they have placed miles between themselves and the object of their dread, I returned into the friendly shelter of the timber and determined to retain it till I saw my quarry. The reindeer is a large animal, still it is most difficult to see when in a state of repose, so much so that the uninitiated would scarcely believe that possibly the place on which his eyes were fixed, not a hundred and fifty yards off, and not superabundantly stocked with brush, sheltered four or five of these noble animals. Such was almost my case, for I had most carefully inspected a little copse of dwarf hemlock and hazel from the back of a log, and had all but come to the conclusion that it was tenantless, when a deer rose like something that



had been shoved up through the earth, exactly where I had gazed several minutes and perceived nothing.

The trails around had made me cautious, they were so fresh and numerous, yet up to this moment I had sighted nothing, and almost commenced to think that the producers of them had been gifted with the power of turning invisible; but such fancies were now dispelled.

Being desirous of making certain of my quarry, I changed my situation and advanced under shelter of the side of a large decayed prostrate tree, to within seventy yards. I had an admirable broad-side shot; the stricken beast staggered, spun round, and lurched forward on its head, four others, in the mean time, jumping up and making off, all of them nearer to me than the creature I had shot; still I had not previously noticed them, in fact their sudden appearance on the scene startled me so much, for it was so thoroughly unexpected, apparently impossible, that they had gone too far before I thought of giving one of them the second barrel.

In an hour more I obtained another shot most unexpectedly. A cariboo I had not previously seen, jumped up within twenty yards of me, and I broke his hip before he had gone double that distance, and a smashed hind leg, not like a fore one, puts a certain stopper on further progression. While examining this

beauty, which had much more white about it than the species usually possess, I observed four cariboes out upon the barren, and apparently admirably situated for a stalk, but having killed enough meat I desisted.

I returned to the shanty perfectly satisfied with the results of my exploration, and feel certain that if assisted by two or three companions who would keep the game moving, half a dozen might easily be killed by one gun between morning and night from a well-selected stand.

On arriving at home I despatched the Indian boy to the camp of my red neighbours to request that they would give me assistance to drag the game out of the woods. Although the distance was quite ten miles, and the ground covered with soft damp snow, the lad performed his errand and was back in eight hours, for which amount of expedition he got a good wiggling, I never for a moment wishing or supposing that he would think of returning the same night. Moreover, I had my fears for a child of his age travelling over such a long solitary reach, for wolves nightly were heard around the shanty, and the species found here, the large grey wolf, is not always to be trusted when winter has placed her stamp on the landscape.

Next morning the old chief, his squaw, two daughters, and a young hunter arrived ; for a portion

of the meat and a plug of tobacco they agreed to pack both the carcasses home. Their hunters, they said, "had very bad hunt this season, their powder so very bad." This I could quite believe, for the trash the traders often foist off on these primitive people is truly disgraceful.

For instance, I have known twenty-five pounds of gunpowder transformed into fifty by the addition to it of an equal quantity of charred wood; the result is that the Indian must, literally speaking, almost be touching his game before he is certain of bringing it to bag. The poor old chief remarked to me so feelingly, that I could not help commiserating him, that "My people be very hungry before this winter over, I guess." Not if I can help it, I mentally resolved.

As no snow had fallen my back track told them the way. Two trips they made that day, and in them backed home the two caribos, therefore the party can scarcely have walked less than twenty-five miles, and the greater part of the journey bearing a heavy load, over ground slippery and wet, in every way unsuited for travelling. I think that there are few Englishmen could do the same; yet these people are slight in their build, impressing one more with an appearance of agility than strength.

It was quite evident to me that evening, as we sat

over our after-supper pipe, that Antoine was smitten with the charms of the youngest daughter, a stout, compact, good-natured, little round-faced girl of about sixteen ; for much of his conversation was addressed to her, and his eyes, when his tongue was silent, seemed to regard her as the centre of attraction. The old squaw did not apparently object, but rather the reverse, possibly being pleased with the idea of possessing a white son-in-law. Thus it will be seen that match-making mothers are not confined to Belgravia, Brixton, and Dalston, but are to be found in the wigwams of the redoubted Red-man. When it was time to turn in, courtesy did not induce me to give up my bunk, so the chief and his family fell asleep on the green cariboo hides, their blankets with some of mine forming their covering, the remainder of the party finding a sleeping place on the other end of the floor. So many human beings packed in so small a dormitory, I felt convinced was not conducive to health ; in fact, I thought that, if it long continued, we would become like a bait kettle overstocked with minnows ; but, under the circumstances, what could I do but submit, for it was out of the question to send them forth into the snow-clad woods after their exertions of the previous day.

## CHAPTER VII.

IN the morning after all had partaken of an ample breakfast, I discharged in full my liabilities, adding a pound of good gunpowder for the old man, a very seedy wide-awake for the old lady, a string of beads for each of the girls, and half a dozen fish-hooks for each of the others. All departed happy, and promised soon to renew their visit.

I wish very much to keep on good terms with these primitive people. Such a desire is not dictated solely from a want of selfishness, for they may be to me of the greatest use ; so if treating them fairly, and never swerving one iota from my promises, will make them friends, I have resolved that they shall be.

Antoine, who has been tolerably successful with his traps heretofore, has lately had a run of bad luck. This he accounts for by a wolverine, or glutton, having discovered them, which follows him ; devours

all the baits, and springs his traps. The last part of the story I scarcely believe, although I have heard this animal accredited with such malpractices before.

Thus he is perfectly disheartened at this *contretemps*, and actually proposes changing our residence, a thing I will not for a moment listen to. Almost snivelling, certainly in such whining accents as nearly approach it, he says :

“No use for me to set any more traps then ; if I stop here my winter hunt spoiled, for that devil never leave here while I set a trap.”

“Why don’t you trap him then?”

“Oh! he know too much; he know enough to keep an hotel.”

After such an assertion I concluded that the effort would be useless.

A few days after he came in whining as usual, and imprecating his bad luck; it was needless trying to pacify him, to all I could say he had one retort :

“I poor man, my winter hunt spoilt, what do you care?” &c.

At length I got him to listen to me. I promised to go his round with him in the morning, and we would devise some means of outwitting the marauder. His countenance, however, clearly expressed



that he thought I must be a fool to think I could trap a wolverine.

It was snowing gently in the morning when we started; the line of traps lay for some distance along the river, then ceased for a mile or two till we reached a miniature lake, on the margin of which he had three. True enough the baits were all gone, and several of the traps sprung; so the snivel commenced to reappear on my comrade's countenance when the last was reached.

I was rather at my wit's end to devise a stratagem that promised success. At length a thought struck me, and I resolved to act upon it.

"Pick up your traps, Antoine, and bring them along."

Without a question he did so; following our previous course backwards we soon had them all gathered.

"Well, now, where do you get your bait from? where is it, man?" In a moment he produced it.

"Now," said I, "set your trap." A look certainly not denoting confidence in my skill as a trapper passed over his countenance; but he did exactly what I told him, and possibly with more than usual care. "Well, now, take all the other traps, about a dozen in number, and place them at short distances around it." This he did also.

"We'll just stop here till the snow covers them,"

I continued; for the snow was coming down fast by this time, and we did so till not a vestige of one was to be seen. Then we started for home, I wishing with all my heart that my device would turn out successful. In the morning—I doubting still hoping—we returned. The ground was tramped down in every direction, while two of the traps were gone. An extraordinary track led towards the woods; this we followed, and soon overtook the object of our pursuit; which had a trap on a fore and another on a hind foot, a pair of boots that did not add to his powers of locomotion.

So vicious looked our foe, and so determined to do mischief if within reach of his pursuers, that I gave him the contents of a barrel at most destructive short range. He did not rob any more traps, I can vouch for.

From that date I was a great hunter in Antoine's estimation, if credence was to be placed in what he said. Over and over again he narrated the whole affair to the Indians, a dozen times I am sure I listened to it; but this I will say that, like old and simple stories we knew in our childhood, it was revived with variations and did not diminish in lustre.

Antoine's success was all he could desire after the above episode, and for the present no further mention was made by him of leaving the shanty.

Although the river is frozen across, we are never short of fish when the weather is sufficiently mild to permit our going out to capture them. Our modes of proceeding to accomplish our object are so novel to the English sportsman, that at least they deserve explanation.

First a hole is cut in the ice and over it is built a hut sufficiently large for a person to sit in. This diminutive shelter is made as dark as possible, an opening only being left in the roof for the uninterrupted passage of the pole of the fisherman's fish spear.

The sportsman inside the structure must be provided with a live bait, or if such is not procurable a wooden representative of one, loaded underneath with lead to keep it upright. Whichever of these used is lowered into the orifice in the ice, and frequently drawn to the surface, the fisherman in the mean time holding in his right-hand the spear, or more properly grains, with which he intends to strike his prey. At length a hungry trout has seen the lure and follows it to the surface, hovering about the ice-hole anxious for a chance to gratify his appetite. Down comes the spear, the victim is shoved to the bottom till the barbs have passed through him, when he is leisurely drawn to the surface, and thrown out upon the ice.

This is not slow work, for at this season the trout are greedy feeders on these northern rivers, so in the course of an hour many may be taken, the majority being of very large size.

The other plan is more simple. A strong line is carried by two persons, one at either end, and thus stretched across a rapid that from the velocity of its current is not frozen. From this main line are attached several droppers, at the termination of each being a hook baited with a shiner; if nothing else is obtainable, a piece of rind of pork will answer. These droppers are lowered into the current, and permitted even to drift under the ice. When a pluck from a fish is observable each person strikes, but does not draw out the fish that has probably become attached, for its struggles will not intimidate its companions from taking the other baits. By this means in a short space of time a trout may be secured on each hook. After the first captures have been made, no scarcity of bait need exist, for there is nothing more killing than a strip from the stomach of one of their fellows.

After all, the most that can be said of both these methods of taking fish is, that they are poaching, rascally inventions, and only justifiable when frail humanity are requiring food.

For several nights the wolves have been giving us

evidence of their vocal powers. They have often yelled so close to the shanty, that I feel convinced they are frequently within range of it, so with a charge of buck-shot in each barrel I kept wait for the gentry, but as usual under such circumstances they did not come. However, an hour after I had gone to bed they opened the concert, and the Indian lad awoke me. Slipping on sufficient clothes for the emergency, I noiselessly opened the door, glided round the corner of the house, so as to command a view of where the refuse from our cooking was thrown. On it and by it were five splendid fellows, each as large as a rough deer-hound, but twice as bulky. The stars were shining brightly, and the snow reflecting their light made it almost as clear as day, so there was no difficulty in taking aim. With the first barrel I tumbled over one fellow dead, with the other I did such injury as to cause the stricken animal to leave a very conspicuous blood-track in the snow.

The winter has nearly passed at last. I will not disguise that it was a dreary period, so much so as to make our lives a near approach to imprisonment. True there were occasional days when the temperature was not sufficiently low to frighten us from going to the river or having a scour over the barrens; but they were the exception, far from the rule; however, whenever we did, we reaped our reward, for nature has not

bestowed animal life on this neighbourhood with a niggard hand. It was therefore with feelings of intense gratification that I saw in the mornings a hard crust upon the snow, indicative of thaw by day but of frost by night, but nevertheless a certain monitor of spring's advent.

The Indians having provided me with snow-shoes, I availed myself of the first chance to go in pursuit of moose; it was not long before they were found, and duly run down and killed. Whatever I thought once, it is needless to say my ideas at the present time are, that you might as well go into a barn-yard and shoot down domestic cattle. Unless to provide food when human beings would otherwise suffer from its want, I agree with Captain Hardy, a well-known, and most reliable authority on the field-sports of the Lower Provinces, that to kill moose when a heavy crust takes place is a most unjustifiable proceeding, so a description of the scenes and *modus operandi* I will leave out.

The maples, which are not very numerous in this locality, are perfectly spouting with sap. I have tapped several trees, and in a short time received a bucketful from each; but as we have not a pot sufficiently large to boil it down in, so as to obtain a commensurate reward for our labour, it has been decided not to attempt sugar making.



Independent of this notice of the approach of spring, the Indian boy saw a robin, and I have had the pleasure of listening to his sweet melodious notes. I hope the poor fellow has not been rash in getting so far north thus early, for the states neighbouring New York and Pennsylvania are his winter habitat.

From the rapidity with which the thaw has taken place after its commencement I have for some days expected that the ice upon the lake, from which our river flows, would break up. I know no more magnificent sight, one that impresses the beholder so thoroughly with his insignificance, than to behold the breaking up of ice upon an extensive lake or river. To those who have not spent their lives in northern climates, the entire scene is so novel and impressive that the beholder stands awe-stricken. Some years ago, when visiting Buffalo, I had the fortune to be an eye-witness to the breaking up of the ice on Lake Erie. It was my first experience of such a sight, and the impression that it made upon me was one that I shall never forget. Curiosity not unmixed with fear, pleasure alloyed with dread, both rapidly flitted through my brain as I wonderingly gazed upon the gigantic fields of snow-covered ice floating towards their destruction, and their vast surfaces a moment after collision with the shore severing into innumerable undefinable irregular fragments. Of course, where I

was now residing I could not expect to witness anything so grand as a flow of ice entering Niagara River, for the stream that passed our shanty was but a rivulet in comparison to the great connecting link that unites Lakes Erie and Ontario. Nevertheless, I looked most anxiously forward to the breaking up, and sincerely hoped it would not occur during the night.

I was sitting in the shanty tying some flies, for I eagerly anticipated the period when I should be able to indulge in my favourite pursuit, and therefore did not delay getting all my fishing-tackle in thorough order before that time arrived that the services of my trout-rod would be called into play, when I heard Antoine's voice suddenly raised, requesting me to come out and join him.

Now my half-breed Frenchman was not of an excitable temperament, so I knew that something serious had occurred to cause him to raise his voice so high. When I joined him he was standing axe in hand by the wood pile, for he had been engaged cutting up firewood. As soon as he was aware that I was at his side, he inquired, "Hear you the ice?" I listened, and could clearly detect a grunting heavy sound. After a few minutes' silence he said, "Soon, Cap, we have plenty clear water; the ice be down here in half an hour."

And true to his statement the advance guard of the broken fields commenced to make its appearance in the time specified. Wishing to have the best view of the novel sight, I took my stand upon one of the rocks that abutted on the river, and contracted its breadth into half its ordinary size. At first only a few spasms in the surface appeared, soon after followed by large rents, which were ultimately succeeded by a wall of peaks and slabs piled upon one another in the wildest confusion. As they floated towards me down the comparatively speaking placid pool above the rock on which I stood, but a trifling alteration took place in their outline ; however, at the moment it entered the surging, boiling, contracted rapid, each portion of the floating ice appeared to struggle with the other to retain the surface ; thus pieces, sometimes tons in bulk, would be shot up over the ice underneath, ultimately to fall down and break into a thousand glittering prisms. I do not exaggerate when I say that I observed numerous blocks of ice over a foot deep and yards in diameter shelved up fifteen or twenty paces upon the shore, while the continual grinding, crushing, and snapping of miniature bergs produced a din that might have been heard miles off ; the only sound that I can liken to it is a continued succession of forest trees falling.

Just below the rapid where the water eddied with sufficient calmness to make it apparently a splendid trout pool, an immense pine snag had lodged. Often previously I had looked at it and wished that I had the power to remove it, or that it had not been there, for I felt convinced that when the fishing season commenced it would rob me of many a fly, possibly of many a yard of gut. With what satisfaction then did I see the irresistible wall of ice strike it; for a few moments there was a halt in its movement, but the rear-guard pushing on the advance, gave additional power, and the decayed pine-tree gradually swung round, halted again for a few instants when its branches caught the opposite shore, then disengaging itself floated before the irresistible chaotic mass.

All that night and the next day the ice continued to flow onwards, but in diminished quantities, till on the third day not a vestige remained to tell of winter's mantle that had so long locked the lake above in her embrace; so winter had fairly broken up, and soon the country around will be free for me to travel in whatever direction the spirit prompts.

Few days pass that some incident or other does not transpire to afford amusement or food for study, and our lives are far from being as dull and un-

interesting as might be imagined. One great source of regret I am constantly recurring to, viz., not having half a bushel or more seed potatoes, for from the amount of clearing we have done to supply firewood and building material for the shanty, there is nearly half an acre now eligible for the cultivation of that excellent and most useful bulb, moreover the soil is admirably suited for their growth, and with the top dressing of ashes that we could give it, would doubtless produce a noble crop, if late frosts should not occur.

My *protégé*, who has been away for a ramble in the woods, for all his spare time is spent in setting snares or inventing infernal machines with which to trap the unwary beasts or birds of the locality, has just returned, grinning from ear to ear. This I know is an index of more than ordinary success.

“What have you got there, youngster?”

“Catchee baby mooin,” struggling hard to hold some animal which he has in a sack, and which appears to be very unwilling to remain captive.

“Mooin ! I don’t understand ; young bear do you say ?”

“Yes, Capen, young mooin ; young devil, he scratch and bite awful, you see ;” so he turned the sack up, and out fell the little snarling vixen.

The prize was about the size of a small King Charles

spaniel; but in its small carcase existed the ferocity of a full-grown representative of his family. No efforts to conciliate had the slightest effect, so after it had bitten me through the boot, and torn into shreds a pair of my unmentionables, the young Indian was ordered to build a house for his pet out-doors. This was soon accomplished, and the establishment smelt sweeter after the cub's expulsion.

As the she bear is very attached to her young, it is almost unaccountable how this little termagant was alone. Poteen found him and drove him up a sapling, his barking bringing the boy to the place. It was lucky for the small Indian that the mother did not return while he was up the tree, or it would have been all up a tree with him.

Antoine for some days past harps upon the subject of opening a trade with such Indians as may be in the locality, and urges quite eloquently that the sum of money to be made through doing so would be immense. To all this I turn an indifferent ear, for the reason that such were not the inducements for my coming here; beside, the limited stock of things I have are now scarcely more than necessary for our own use, more especially if anything should occur to prevent our leaving at the time originally intended.

I suppose that seeing the subject was not interesting



to me, he altered his tactics, and asked if I would object to his leaving me for a time, more especially as he thought he saw a prospect of bettering himself. I replied, I would rather he did not, but that he was his own master; and wishing to terminate the conversation I took my gun and went out.

The young bear had been only three days a captive. I was lying on my bunk smoking my evening pipe, for supper was over, when the boy came in, for he had been sent to procure firewood; tears were in his eyes. As I had never seen him cry before, I thought something serious must have happened, so I asked him what was the matter.

“My mooin gone,” he said, and fairly broke down.

So I had to turn comforter and assure him, “poor little baby, he shall have another mooin;” but it was a long time before my consolation appeared beneficial. On examination we discovered the cub had slipped his collar. “Good riddance,” thought I.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE floating ice had scarcely disappeared from the river before wild-duck made their appearance, not at first in large flights, but in half-dozens or more, the advance guard of the main body.

It is extraordinary the instinct which teaches these birds to know when they may advance with safety into a country that heretofore has been ice-bound. Although in the autumn I have known them make a mistake, and linger about a favourite haunt till they have ultimately got frozen in—not figuratively, for I have found them hard and fast in such a position—still in spring they never overstep the limits of prudence.

First came the pin-tail, or pheasant duck, always the forerunner, and, consequently, the most adven-

turous of his family; not wild as they are generally found to be upon the prairies, but reckless of all danger as long as they can follow the river's course. As their flesh is ever good, and a most acceptable change from the diet on which we had been living for months, I availed myself of their arrival to add to our larder. In the course of an afternoon, certainly within two hours' shooting, I killed over three dozen, and only desisted because my stock of ammunition was commencing to show visible signs of diminution.

Of all shooting I have ever participated in, this was the most old-fogeyish; for I had nought to do but sit upon the rock that formed the gate into the rapid, and wait for the birds' arrival; and as the river was not tortuous for over some distance above my position, their approach could be seen long before they came within range. Moreover, this work required no retriever, for the carcasses of those that fell in the stream were generally washed ashore before they had floated many yards.

There was feasting in camp that night, for the pin-tail duck, in these inland regions, is a splendid table bird, well fed and tender, and worthy of being considered a *bonne bouche* among epicures.

After the pin-tails had passed to more northern haunts, the glorious green-headed mallard came;

although progenitor of our tame duck, with which every one is familiar, still familiarity in this instance does not breed contempt.

That grey breast and lustrous green neck is the perfection of combination of colour, and the strength and velocity with which his strong wings cleave the air, adds to his other attractions. A prince among game I pronounce him, and there are few who deserve the name of sportsmen will doubt that such an appellation is not deservedly bestowed.

Beyond killing a few couple I did not molest them, for although anyhow I might have knocked over a dozen, they were not required, and so I permitted them unmolested to proceed to their far-north breeding ground, from which in autumn they will doubtlessly return with replenished numbers.

The flight of the mallard continued for nearly a week, the rear-guard being better fed, and, consequently, in better condition than those who had gone before. These were the drones of the migratory herd, willing to enjoy the advantages exposed by their more adventurous comrades.

But duck shooting did not here terminate for more than six weeks after the ice had broken; in fact, there was not an hour of the day but that teal, black duck, and mergansers in large

flocks followed the course of the river to their breeding haunts.

Geese also passed in large numbers during the day, generally too high for an ordinary gun to do certain execution; but if at early hours, or late in the evening, twenty-five or thirty yards above the river course would not be above their elevation. Can it be wondered at, then, with all these magnificent birds hourly passing within range, that although I desisted from shooting, I took my stand, which was frequently directly under their course, to watch their progress?

To one skilled in fiddle-strings and wind instruments the call of howh! howh! may not be attractive; but fortunately we are not all formed in the same mould, or possess the same partialities.

How lucky that it should be so, for if not, every one would be falling in love with the same baby face, which would be certain to lead to a vast amount of bloodshed; for nought angers a man so much as finding he has a rival in his love affairs, unless it be witnessing a stranger or objectionable person abusing his dog.

I have not said anything regarding the swans, who also are included among the migrators who go north at this season of the year. During light many of

these large handsome birds were constantly to be seen cleaving their way through the raw atmosphere to their summer haunts. At night their voices appeared incessantly calling, no small proof that their habits are partially nocturnal.

Above the shanty, on an old limbless hemlock, a pair of bald-eagles had found a suitable perch. Their position was well chosen, for several hundred yards above and below their perch, they could see whatever approached them that followed the river's course. As soon as they had adopted this roosting place I should have either dispossessed them, or killed one or both; but I had read Audubon's description of the pursuit of a swan by an eagle, and wished to witness such a scene.

In the morning I had been round with Antoine lifting traps; the tramp had been a severe one, and, by-the-bye, I was very nearly being rendered unable to narrate further exploits, for his gun went off while straddling over a log, but fortunately did no more damage than carrying away the right pocket of my shooting-coat. It is not agreeable to be shot at when receiving pay from Her Majesty for submitting to such a process, even when you know that a pension awaits you for life, if called upon in future years to stamp about with a cork-leg, or from the loss of an



arm be unable to dress without assistance ; but I most decidedly object to a charge of No. 6 in the small of the back, or, in fact, in any other part of my person, although administered by a friend. So I postponed the remainder of my tramp for an indefinite future time, and found my way homewards. After a few mouthfuls of lunch I lit my pipe, and sauntered to my favourite perch on the rock ; for down the channel of the river, a cool current of air ever passed, and the situation seldom was without attractions to the observant lover of natural history.

In the distance I heard the familiar call of swans ; gazing intently south I with difficulty managed to make out their snow-white column. Gradually as my sight had attained the proper focus, and the phalanx advanced towards me, each individual that composed the force became distinguishable.

On the hemlock were perched the two bald-headed eagles ; no further perceptible movement being apparent in them than that their height obviously had increased, and their width diminished. From previous observation I had noticed this before ; it doubtless was a bracing of the system together, previous to engaging in an undertaking more than usually hazardous.

When I noticed this alteration in the figure of the birds of prey, I became convinced that I was about

to see what I had so long and earnestly craved to behold. It was a sight to witness, a drama about to be played, that the stay-at-home naturalist, the accepted authority upon all subjects in connexion with the animal creation never sees, but still gets credit for witnessing—and why so? because he is read deeply in the wanderer's experiences, and indites with flowing pen and with subtle language from them—and on this borrowed knowledge writes an article that goes forth to the world to be applauded, quoted, and ultimately the scribbler is credited with the reputation of being a great observer of the animal creation.

I wish I had command of the most eloquent language, for here is a chance to bring it with purpose into play; but, unfortunately, I have been reared in camp and barrack, where the most familiar sound to my ear was the hoarse bray of the trumpet, or the clarion notes of the bugle. Nor am I come of a literary race, for my progenitors for many, many generations, have had no other ambition than to lead companies, or head regiments.

The Indian is a great hunter, because through a long line of ancestors the love of venerie is hereditary; the game of the present day are wilder than when bolts and cross-bows were used in their pursuit, for the ancestors of them have learned that it is no

longer safe to come within the same distances of man.

So it is with scribblers; nine instances out of ten their forefathers] have lived by their pen, or made a reputation by it. In youth, from the buoyance of that period they may have neglected it, but ultimately they bow their necks to the yoke, or permit the harness to be put upon them, like the beast of labour that had, no matter how long ago, been broken in. At first their brain may be rusty, and the pen refuse to indite their thoughts, but only limited perseverance is necessary to bring them into the channel that those from whence they are sprung have pursued. Why this bitter, long rhodomontade? Because critics will cut up a work that has emanated from practical experience, when all they know upon the subject is what they have read.

But to revert to the swans; no sooner were they within a hundred yards of the bald eagles, than both birds of prey, with a velocity that was astonishing, dashed upwards into the heavens till nearly lost to sight, and the noisy host of white-plumed birds broke up their formation and scattered in all directions, for well did they appear to know the hostility of this demonstration. On outstretched wing, with rapid stroke, a swan so large and strong that age must

be credited to him, dashed down the river course. When nearly opposite to me a tearing, rending, rushing sound reverberated from the air above; it was the eagles descending upon their destined victim. But the battle is not ever to the strong, and the persecuted bird avoided the impetuous swoop—but, how?—by dashing down into the pellucid water and diving beneath its surface.

Disappointed the birds of prey hovered aloft; in a few moments again they swooped downwards, but their destined prey knew the safety of his position, and dived before the assailants could strike him. Again and again this ruse was practised, and the baffled persecutors returned to their roosting-place.

It was a glorious example of how the strong can be worsted by the weak, the tyrant by the powerless, and if I could have done as I pleased I would have taken that swan home, given him the best my limited larder afforded, a secure night's rest, and turned him loose in the morning to seek his companions, and afterwards taken my gun and have had a shot at his persecutors.

For a long time I puzzled my brain why an old bird, full of experience, should have selected the hazardous route—for those that flew landways were unmolested. I am willing to accredit reasoning

powers to the rest of the animal creation, besides allowing man alone to monopolise them; and for this reason, previous long experience had taught him how to cope with such a foe, and where to regain his relatives whom he had been forced so summarily to desert.

No schoolboy has not read of Quintus Curtius, and in his innermost soul lauded his valour; but here was an insignificant bird running the fire of two implacable foes, to draw them away from those less capable of escaping their attacks.

That night most unexpectedly Antoine informed me that he purposed starting north on a trading expedition among the Indians on the upper waters of the Ottawa.

This took me quite by surprise, for I had no idea that he intended leaving me before I returned to civilisation.

On this point I expressed my opinion strongly, still he argued with me, that as his absence would not last over a few weeks, and that he should make out of his trip a lot of money, I finally consented to his going.

But I had not got rid of him yet, for just as we were turning into our respective bunks, after having a very strong tumbler of whisky-punch each, he told

me that his entire venture would be ruined if I would not let him have some of my stores.

At first I hummed and hawed to this request, but ultimately acceded to it; so I handed him over a spare gun, several pounds of powder, a couple of bags of shot, as well as a host of gew-gaws of Birmingham manufacture. When I awoke next morning he had gone; how he had taken his load away I could not conceive.

A favourite animal of mine is the fat, well-to-do, comfortable-looking musk-rat, generally called by the Indians musquash. About them exists none of the disagreeable associations we always possess towards the common brown or Norway rat; and although a rodent, the North American animal would have been much more agreeably christened, and made far more popular, if the Indian synonym had been preserved.

On a large-sized tributary of the river, about a mile distant from our residence, I often have taken my seat to watch the busy industrious creatures sporting about in their favourite element. Their apparent confidence in the goodwill of the intruder, the mingled air of curiosity and inquiry with which they regard you, the beauty of their large intelligent dark eye, soon cause them to be regarded as friends



in whose habits you centre a large amount of interest. The similarity of the musquash to the beaver is so very striking that the inexperienced are often induced to mistake them for the young of the latter animal, for the only external perceptible difference is that the beaver's tail is flat horizontally, the musk-rat's vertically, and I should imagine in consequence far better suited both to steer and assist in propelling its possessor forward, when submerged beneath the surface of the water. Although during the whole winter, when I have visited this retired stream, around the air-holes in the ice, numbers of these pets of mine were to be seen, or evidences of their vicinity from the quantity of shells of the fresh-water mussel they had left on the margin of the open water, still their numbers never appeared so great as on this spring evening. Look in whatever direction I chose, the water was being cleft by these indefatigable children of the lakes and rivers of this forest land, all apparently intent on the important business of building a new home to replace that of last season, which had been washed away by the freshets that had occurred at the breaking-up of the ice. Their power in the water is really surprising, for frequently they will be observed pushing or dragging towards the site chosen for their new mansion

branches of trees, and bunches of reeds so large as almost to hide from view the persevering little creatures that direct the course of the floating *débris*. Moreover, the very greatest affection and understanding apparently exists between the male and female, for if the wind or current be too strong for one to transport the load to the destination it is intended for, a long low and plaintive whistle will immediately call the mate to assist in the navigation of the prize. How it is anchored when it reaches the place intended, I never could tell, but it is secured. At the same time it must be remembered that [their houses are never built in the current, but in bays or inlets, where, however, there would be sufficient wind to remove them if such a precaution were not taken. When a branch of a size larger than the musk-rats choose to make use of is brought by either to the spot chosen for their future home, the small limbs are dexterously lopped off, and the main artery allowed to float away. Rushes, however, form the principal portion of which this water residence is composed, the fine limbs of trees being only utilised for uprights between which to weave in the softer material, or here and there introduced around the sides to impart strength, which it would not otherwise possess.

Although the male and female are very gentle and very loving to each other, they are excessively jealous of their rights, and attack an intruder of their species with such fury and vindictiveness as to cause the water fairly to boil around the scene of battle. This evening I was rewarded with a view of such a rencontre.

Just opposite to my position, but across the stream within thirty or more yards from where I sat, a pair of musquash were exceedingly busy, every few moments one or other departed to return with something necessary for the construction of their house. At length the larger one appeared to be longer absent than usual, and anxiety to have taken possession of the partner left behind, for he or she, I think it was the lady, would every few moments cease from work, sit up on hind legs and gaze anxiously about. Presently above me appeared a limb of a tree, nearly six feet long, and about the thickness of my finger at the larger portion of the main stem; slowly it came floating down the tranquil current, gradually edging off towards the opposite shore. A little closer inspection enabled me to detect the builder of the domicile across the water, who evidently had no easy task in hand, and was not sparing his strength to accomplish it. While ad-

miring the pluck and perseverance of the little labourer, a head of another musk-rat popped up above the surface of the water in his immediate vicinity ; the new comer evidently having designs on the property of my acquaintance. Whether or not, his arrival was evidently far from agreeable, if I may judge from the manner of his reception. The stranger was much larger than the other, and I should deem from his darker coat, older, and of course more experienced. Evidently conscious of superior strength, he avoided parley and proceeded at once to exercise a high hand, by making a dash at the possessor of the branch. This assault, however, was dexterously avoided, the smaller musk-rat instantly diving out of sight, the larger taking possession instantly of the coveted prize and using every exertion to direct it towards the side on which I was sitting. I thought how broken-hearted my poor little friend would be to lose his lawful property, and with what a long and disappointed face he would confide his woes to the partner of his bosom, when he reappeared again and took hold of the end of the limb, evidently using all his power to counteract the exertions of his antagonist.

The struggle lasted but a few moments ; the larger animal let go his hold and made for the other, the

latter refusing the contest, again diving to reappear on the surface at the other end of the branch a moment or two after its possessor had regained his old position. Again there was a pulling match, succeeded by the original owner being driven off. However he was not vanquished, only plotting how he could reobtain possession of the coveted prize. By this time the misappropriator, with his spoil, had got within twenty yards of where the residence of his victim was being built, the despoiled close to him with a watchful eye on his late treasure, his wife busily engaged in her architectural pursuits. I heard a low long whistle, the female raised her head, listened, looked towards the bough and noiselessly glided into the water; in a moment or two afterwards she was beside her partner; then ensued a short confab, and both dived, reappearing immediately on the surface on either side of the thief. Without an instant's hesitation the interloper was attacked; for several minutes a terrific battle ensued, if just estimate could be formed from the amount of struggling and splashing that took place, and that my friends were victorious was apparent, for I had the satisfaction of seeing them safely moor the contested branch among the other materials that were collected to weave into their future domicile.

But night was closing in, the large Canadian owl was hooting from his solitary resting-place among the boughs of some sombre hemlock, a sure sign that darkness would soon drape the landscape, so I retired from the lone woodland stream and left it to its nocturnal visitors.



## CHAPTER IX.

A WALK through Canadian forest land during nearly all portions of the year, especially towards sunset, is oppressive and saddening from the sombreness of the foliage and the intense stillness that reigns around; however, at this season it is quite a contrast to the rule, for every direction now has found a voice. The stranger who cares not for the study of nature, and consequently knows little about it, would listen with ears of astonishment to the number and variety of notes that issue from every nook and cranny, particularly if his acquaintance with uncleared land had been confined to winter and autumn.

When the cold biting winter has passed and the snows fled, and the genial rays of the spring sun warm the surface of the earth, innumerable varieties of animal life which have hitherto been torpid are restored to animation, and from them

proceed the greater portion of the curious, but none the less melodious notes that break the stillness of the surrounding shadow land.

Yes, it is to the reptilia that all this harmony of sound is due, rejoicing doubtless that a new life to them is born, and that a period of captivity and inactivity is passed. The birds warble forth their dulcet notes in spring, the children of man at that season seem more joyous in their out-door sports, and give vent more frequently to their pleasure with up-raised merry laugh ; as with the winged beauties, as with the youth of our own race, so it is with the lower orders of the animal creation.

But to revert to the choristers of the primeval forest of the lone western lands, chief among them, when water is in the vicinity, is the common American toad. Although far from attractive in appearance, he is not nearly so ugly as his English relative. Listen to his strange solemn voice ; it is not harsh or disagreeable, so far in fact from such in its thrilling cadence, that it cannot be imagined to proceed from so unattractive a shape, or so expressionless a visage. Inactive and sluggish both by formation and inclination, scarcely changing position for hours, again and again he utters his vibratory notes throughout the livelong night. Next among the musicians is

the little tree-frog, a tiny active fellow, not three-quarters of an inch long, whose whistle is as joyous as that of the common house cricket, only much more voluminous. He utters his quick chirp, never tiring, never ceasing, while the sun's rays are not pouring down upon his perch.

Another of this band of choristers is the green-headed frog, the basso profundo of the woodland stream; his deep-toned voice may be heard for half a mile of a still evening. As frogs go, he is a pretty creature, with yellow throat, and black-green barred back; a very bully is he too among the smaller reptilia, who hush in grave respect when he chooses to give utterance. But his life, with all his pomposity of manner, is not without its dangers, for the water adder and the black snake love to make him their prey, and when the hour of hot pursuit by his bloodthirsty foe comes, how rapidly does he change his pompous notes for the timorous squeak of the most insignificant of his genus. A close observer of nature can trace a likeness in every animal, however humble it may be in the scale, to some representative of the human family; thus I have often thought this frog to resemble a purse-proud, upstart citizen, probably a guardian of the poor, blatant, bullying, and pompous, while he possesses wealth; sycophantic, grovelling, and pluckless in the days of adversity.

The snow-water by this time having been washed out of all the neighbouring streams, it is time to commence preparations for the capture of the vermillion-speckled, copper-burnished flanked trout, for until that takes place the most skilful angler may throw his fly ever so lightly, hide his shadow ever so skilfully, or fish with the longest line that strong wrist and pliant rod can carry from him, but all his efforts will go unrewarded. It is a strange, but nevertheless a true fact, that although the trout of these distant waters will take the bait with avidity when ice covers both their river and lake haunts, they perfectly disregard any allurement during the season that their homes are swollen into flood by the influx of melted snow. All I have questioned for information as to the reason of this, have responded unanimously, "Don't know!" Thought, and the knowledge that there is a cause for every result, induce me to think, that snow-water being more penetrating than that of rain, becomes impregnated more strongly by the decayed vegetation, causing the fish in consequence to become listless, sick, and disinclined to feed.

I have frequently taken a cupful of snow-water from indentations and ridges on the hillside where I knew it was unalloyed with any other, and it has

always possessed a very dark colour as well as a stringent taste. In fact, the former appearance is so apparent, that I believe I can always detect its presence in a stream from the dull neutral tint it imparts to all waters it mixes with. Such being the case, will not the most sceptical acknowledge that I have good grounds for coming to the previous conclusion?

The water of Northern American rivers is wonderfully clear, with a bright greenish shade, unless at such times as they are swollen by floods, when if their course has flowed through heavily-timbered lands, they become as thick and muddy as it is possible to imagine; those that flow over barrens, on the other hand, although increased in volume by rainfall, suffer almost imperceptibly in colouration.

My *début* was not a success. I tried several of the best streams and reaches without doing more than raising a few insignificant fish. In England I might have changed my flies, attributing to their non-attractiveness my failure; but here it was not necessary, for when trout are on the feed they are never fastidious.

However, my time was not thrown away, for on my walk home I had opportunities of observing some of the most interesting sights that the eye of the lover of nature can rest upon.

To shorten my journey, instead of following the erratic course of the river I struck across a marsh, the edge of which margined a large shallow pool. I was about leaving its brilliant green spongy surface when a wild-duck, the female of our common mallard, flushed at my feet. After flying a few yards she dropped into the weeds, apparently incapable of proceeding further. Skye, my little favourite, was with me ; in an instant he started in pursuit. To recall him I deemed unnecessary, for well I knew the bird could take care of herself, and that she was only perpetrating a ruse to draw the intruder from the vicinity of her nest. In a few moments after, the duck again was on the wing, a second time to fall as if overpowered with the exertion. This appeared to give confidence to my companion, for giving tongue in his delight at the hope of making an immediate capture, he rushed on after his would-be prey. A third time the trick was repeated, the duck on this occasion flying further, and ultimately dropping into the river ; but previous victimising did not appear one iota to have damped Skye's hopes of success. In the mean time I had been carefully examining the vicinity, for a nest I knew was not far distant. In a clump of last year's withered sedge I discovered eight eggs, which, judging from their opaque and dead-looking colour, I deemed were more than half



hatched. If I had examined them minutely I possibly could have told more closely how long they had been sat upon; but I preferred to leave my curiosity unsatisfied, as by gratifying it I should have been obliged to handle the eggs, which might and frequently does cause a duck to forsake her nest. Soon after I had resumed my tramp my dog joined me; his expression was sheepishness personified, and the more I chaffed him, in such words as, "Poor fellow! then he did not catch the duck," the more ashamed of himself he apparently became.

I have often thought that this canine friend could understand all I said. There is not a doubt that he did some sentences; for instance, in the morning, if I was preparing to go out, and did not wish his society, I had but to say, "No little dogs with me to-day;" and although he had been using every effort to attract my attention, and evincing the liveliest interest in my preparations, he would at once sneak into a corner and regard me askance with the most heart-broken expression. Again, if of an evening after dark the shanty door were opened, Skye's greatest anxiety appeared to be to get out first. To tease him I would retain the door sufficiently ajar to prevent his egress; impatiently but quietly he would wait

ready for a rush when such became practicable. However, if I said to him, "No night for little dogs to be out, big wolves outside ready to eat him up," his hair would rise on his back, the sides of his lips curl so as to expose his teeth, uttering at the same time the angriest and most defiant growls.

Reverting to my tramp homewards. The woods are now fairly filled with migratory birds that have spent the winter in the more hospitable climate of Mexico or the Southern States. Few of them are such songsters as are to be found in Great Britain, if we except the hermit thrush and American robin, both of whom possess very sweet voices; but they do not appear so fond of exercising their vocal powers as the warblers of our home woods and hedge-rows. The woodpeckers, at this season, are also most noisy, and gifted with even a more than ordinary amount of energy. Their day seems to be taken up with incessant squabbling or magging, for each appears to have a voice in his neighbour's business, if not to interfere further. I watched a pair which had taken possession of a hole in a large limb of a dead tree, evidently with the intention of commencing housekeeping therein. In half an hour a dozen visitors at least must have come to see them; and the angry high words that immediately after the arrival of each stranger took place,

was a disgrace to society, whether among birds or human beings. I do not think that the callers were gallants come to make love to the bride, for then she would be probably timid, bashful, and silent; but it was quite the reverse, for the lady's voice was as highly pitched as her lord's, and her manner equally rude and objectionable.

Within a quarter of a mile of the clearing which we have formed by supplying the shanty fire with fuel, a few yards from what has now become quite a path, I heard a hare scream from some long bottom grass. Skye in a moment was all eyes and ears, ready for a rush; but by a single word I checked him, for he is now under most perfect control. After a few moments the scream was repeated more to our front, and soon afterwards a hare staggered across the track. A word of encouragement and Skye was off, for I thought poor pussy with the long ears had been seized by a weasel. Soon I was convinced that I was in error as to my supposition; for again and again I heard the dog struggling with something of no ordinary size or strength, so I hurried to his assistance. To my gratification I found his antagonist to be a very large mink, whom his repeated shaking had by this time reduced to obedience. Why my little attendant had attacked so powerful a foe instead of

the hare was to me a mystery ; but as I said before, he was imbued with more than ordinary sense, and, as he looked up in my face with his loving hazel eyes, he accepted my praise with the dignity of one knowing himself worthy of approbation. This mink would have been quite a prize late in autumn, for then they possess a beautiful dark close fur ; but at this season its pelt was useless, the old coat having come off in patches, the new one only beginning to grow.

Snipe, which had commenced arriving immediately after the thaw set in, were now assembled in immense numbers on all the low-lying wet lands that margined the rivers and lakes, and in the bogs on the hillsides. They are so remarkably tame that they never attempted to flush till almost stepped upon, and even then their flight did not exceed thirty or forty yards. If ammunition in out of the way places like this did not require economising, I could have made such bags as would have provoked the disbelief of my countrymen. How is it that they will seldom believe in any performance that occurs abroad surpassing their own home deeds ?

When I was a lad, in a short winter day, I killed twenty-two brace of woodcocks. A few years since I happened to mention the subject in a London club. A gentleman whom I had met previously, and who

had shot a good deal in the South of England, without expressing himself so, appeared sceptical, and remarked :

“That must have been in some of your foreign shooting trips.”

I answered, “In Ireland.”

“I knew it,” said he, continuing ; “you fellows who go abroad do most extraordinary things. Why, I never killed a quarter of that number in the best preserved covers in England, and how could you make such a bag where there are no game laws?”

Of course, after an argument so clinching, coming from a person who called the Emerald Island abroad, and asserted it did not possess game laws, I said nothing ; but there was a titter on every listener’s face, and the laugh might have been—I say might—have been against me.

As none of the snipe here show any indication of pairing, I am inclined to believe that their great breeding-ground is further to the north ; still of a calm still evening, after the sun has gone down, you can hear them giving utterance to that peculiar bleating call, that at home is generally accepted as an indication that they have mated. Thus snipe, like many other birds who are almost silent nearly all the year round, find that their voice possesses a new

or long unused note in spring, which they discontinue when tired of, as children would a toy that they had perfectly revelled over when first they became its owner. Possibly it may be that the birds that bleat want a mate, so cease to do so when paired.

Killing a dozen snipe in almost as many minutes, I finished off shooting by putting both barrels into a flock of blue-winged teal. I had seen these handsome birds several times when in the marsh; but although apparently not afraid of me, they still contrived to direct their flight far beyond my reach. This could scarce have been wariness, for I was out in open exposed ground when they came within range, my reward being eight mature well-fed birds killed dead, and three cripples, only one of which I recovered.



## CHAPTER X.

THE canoe, which has been useless since winter set in, will, now that the ice has gone, be in daily requisition. Rest, however, seems not to have improved it, for when floated it leaked like a seive, so there is at least a day's work upon it before its services can be made available. Thus young Red-skin with the unpronounceable name, but generally called by me "Sugar-tooth," or more frequently still, "Sugar," was despatched to the woods to gather gum to cover such places as let in the water. The Indians, all of them, even the squaws, are wondrously skilful in building birch-bark canoes, and in repairing them. I have never met a white man who can approach them in constructing these buoyant little crafts, and the mechanical tools they employ are of the simplest description, generally only an axe and knife, sometimes in addition a spokeshave—still they are so beautifully finished that any one would suppose

they had been fabricated by the most skilled workman, with every implement at command that a carpenter could think of.

Not being able to get on without Sugar, I lounged into the shanty to enjoy a quiet smoke and undisturbed thought. I might have been half an hour in fairyland, possibly more, when the sharp bark of Skye and the suppressed growl of Poteen recalled my scattered wits, for I knew some one was approaching. On going to the door I saw Master Red-skin bounding along with his load on his back, and a grin on his face that denoted that he had made some important discovery.

"Oh, Cap," he commenced as soon as within speaking distance, "I seed sich a moo-in" (Indian for bear). "Get your gun, Cap, I show him you most in a minute. Come, Capen, do" (he always addressed me so when he wanted a favour done).

I took down my gun, and while extracting the old charges young Sugar informed me that while stripping some tamarack roots for sewing up the rents in the canoe he heard a log roll over. Quietly he picked up the result of his labour, and went to investigate the cause, doubtless at the same time suspecting it. A white man probably could not have approached the bear without giving alarm; but an

Indian can do anything that is necessary to make a successful stalk, aye, crawl up to game as stealthily and silently as a snake upon its prey.

“ Well, what did you see ? ”

“ Sich a big mooin, a long-legged mooin, and he no see me, so I come to fetch you. ”

Calling Poteen, and ordering Skye home, I followed my little guide for nearly a mile ; the wind was in our favour so no detour was necessary. After a cautious stalk of a hundred yards we reached where the boy had been gathering the tamarack roots, which he pointed out with pantomimic actions, then indicated the position of the log. Leading the way on hands and knees, I soon spied it, but no bear. Examining the ground, I found it had lately been scratched on the surface, where the dead piece of timber had laid, also the bark was pulled off the decayed wood in several places to enable master Bruin to catch with his prehensile lips the wood-lice and other insects that had obtained a sanctuary underneath. I never doubted that the lad had spoken the truth, but even if I had, the signs I saw before me were most conclusive evidence of his statement. The only thing I feared was that the young Indian in retiring to give me notice was too hurried, and thus had broken a dead limb and so had given warning of his presence to the game.

The dog expressed such eagerness to be let go, evidently scenting the game, that at last I permitted him, for I had no fear for his safety, he being none of your headstrong, reckless animals, but one that knew most thoroughly how to take care of himself. Still I thought he would have pluck to snap the bear's heels, and thus drive him up a tree—a performance any Indian cur will do with perfect impunity ; in fact, I am certain little Skye would, but I feared his valour getting the better of his discretion, particularly if I should come in the vicinity of the quarry before it treed.

Waiting for some sound to guide our future movements, soon Poteen's voice rung clear and sharp through the woods ; again and again it echoed over the forest with a vindictiveness I was far from prepared for. Sugar and I sprung over the fallen timber, rushed through the close-knitted cedars, struggled through underbrush and briers, still the further we went the more distant became the dog's voice. At length young Red-skin proposed our directing our steps for the river, which was not distant over a quarter of a mile, as the chase appeared to be making in that direction, although further up stream. Acting on the impulse of the moment, although then tolerably out of wind, we briskly struggled through the brush till we reached its margin. The stream

having fallen considerably below high-water line, without serious impediment we followed up its course, Poteen still giving vent to his feelings with the most angry barks.

At length there was a partial silence, then a few angry half-smothered notes, when just as I cleared by wading an immense granite boulder that barred my path, I saw the bear leaving the water on the reverse side, about a hundred and fifty yards above me, with the dog close in his rear. In a moment I pitched my gun to the shoulder; with a smooth bore it was but a very slim chance, still I pulled the trigger, giving quite six inches of elevation. At the first report Bruin threw his head up and shook it several times, the ball from the left barrel, although the line of fire was apparently correct, I should think, from it striking the water first, ricocheted over his back. At the first shot I was not impressed with the belief that I had hit my mark, still I believe I went so close as to render it rather unpleasant.

As soon as both hound and game were out of the water, the dog's voice rang forth as determinedly as ever, and I commenced to believe that Poteen was a very ill-used animal by my doubting his pluck, and that he would have the noble revenge of throwing my words in his maligner's teeth by ultimately tree-

ing the bear. So down stream we ran to where there was a ford, if a place could be called so that was up to your knee one step, to your shoulders the next, and if you deviated to the right or left one yard, over the head with something to spare. Placing my ammunition in my cap, and pulling it well over my head, I made the first plunge, not stopping to hesitate, for to hesitate in such an undertaking, is ultimately to funk it altogether. I prospered till I was congratulating myself that I had got wonderfully well over the first portion, for so far I had only been half-thigh deep, when plump I went off a rock up to my ribs, and commenced to feel the current lifting me, when fortunately I felt with my foot a boulder whose surface I gained, and from there the shore, without further accident, a pole which I picked up on the beach being the means under providence vouchsafed to save me from a swim. But Sugar, poor child, had no such luck (he was only thirteen years of age); refusing to be left behind, he was set swimming early in the proceedings, and landed half-drowned on the side with myself, but quite one hundred yards lower down stream.

For some minutes we had not heard Poteen; I noticed this while crossing the ford, but I accounted for it by his voice being drowned by the sound of the



rushing water. This made me impatient, for I wanted to be moving after my bath, and no doubt I expressed it, for young Red-skin looked up in my face and said :

“ No hurry, Cap; him,” meaning Poteen, “ a good pup.”

I discovered afterwards that they were bedfellows, and Master Sugar did not wish his chum's character aspersed. Well, we listened and waited, waited and listened half an hour; as cold an half-hour as I wish my greatest enemy to pass, and were about retracing our steps across the river, when in the distance, aye quite a mile away, the voice of my dog was distinguishable. Again there was a rush for it; but the first quarter of a mile was most execrable travelling, log lay over and was interlaced with log, while hemlock and cedar, with a fair proportion of long straggling thorns, combined to prevent aught in the shape of animal, let alone six feet of humanity, getting through it. To those who know a cedar swamp, I have said enough; to those who do not, my advice is, go and try a helter-skelter race through it—if you want a new sensation.

Thank goodness, at length we reached higher ground, and yard after yard our progression became easier, till we reached the barren where all was tolerably plain sailing in comparison to what we had

gone through. A momentary halt was now called to recover wind and direction, as for some time back we had not heard Poteen's voice; but we were not long destined to be deprived of that favour, for again and again, with apparently renewed courage and vigour, he proclaimed that his game had not eluded him; but our exertions were not finished, another cedar swamp as bad as the first, but not so wide, had to be crossed; gallantly we did it, although leaving behind extravagantly large selvages as samples of the material my tailor had provided me with. Happy tailor to have a customer so interested in his success as to advertise his wares by leaving samples of them in such distant parts of the earth.

But at last Poteen, his mouth covered with blood and earth, joins us, for he came a few yards to meet us as if to return thanks for our coming to his assistance, then with renewed vigour he rushes among the neighbouring boulders, growls, scratches, seizes intervening and obstructing roots in his teeth, and behaves in a general way like a very brave dog.

With full-cocked gun, and ready for all emergencies, even to fight to the death, I examine the cavity that the dog is so busy upon; its size forbids the possibility of a bear ever having entered it, and all our search fails to disclose another. "Mysterious

certainly," thought I, while a sad and disappointed smile flitted over young Red-skin's face. Quietly he seized Poteen by the tail, and gave him a hoist out of the hole he was excavating (which his bedfellow did not choose to resent), then squatted and almost crawled out of sight headforemost, returning immediately afterwards to daylight with a porcupine by the hind leg.

I didn't say much, I was afraid to, for fear the bear might be near, and that he'd have the satisfaction of chuckling over our being sold. Well, Sugar killed that porcupine, not in the least out of spite, oh no! and Poteen was left ten minutes before the quills were picked out of his lips; this delay, I am under the impression, was not caused by forgetfulness. But if any one should see cruelty in the latter part of the preceding narrative, remember the disappointment.

It was our fault and not the dog's that the bear was not treed, for if we had stood still when Poteen first came up to Bruin, instead of alarming him by breaking through the brush so recklessly, he would never have thought of rushing away, but have gone to tree in the first convenient place. Again, the trail of a porcupine is so strong that not one dog in fifty can resist the temptation of pursuing them

whenever opportunity offers, deserting even the warmest scent of other game for the pleasure of a worry, although it is certain to result in a snout full of spines.

Dispirited, cold, and wet, we got home, the jauntiest of the party being Poteen, who carried his tail over his hurdies with a swirl, indicating that he laboured under the belief that he had distinguished himself, and that he was regarded by his master with eyes of unusual favour.

The Canadian porcupine, although not unlike his prototype of the old world, differs in many essential points, more especially in regard to the length of the spines, which never exceed three inches, and also in the size and power of its tail, which strikes right and left when its possessor is assailed, with force sufficient to cover with spines whatever soft substance it comes in collision with, and these being barbed, are exceedingly difficult to extract without breaking, when if such takes place severe pain and inflammation is certain to ensue to the recipient of the objectionable shafts.

Essentially a cave dweller, still, except in winter, they spend much of their time abroad wandering indolently in search of mast or berries, or climbing slowly to the highest limbs of trees that will support their weight, to obtain a favourite article of their

diet—buds, young leaves, or bark of the latest growth. An impression seems to prevail that they are incapable of activity ; but such is a mistake, for if so minded they can run with sufficient speed to outstrip the swiftest man.

By the Indians they are much prized as an article of food, and for their quills, which are used, after being stained various bright colours, to ornament the different curiosities the Red-man fabricates out of birch bark for disposal among the settlements.

Early in autumn this animal becomes loaded with fat, and a little later their rutting season commences. In spring the female produces, two being the number of her annual family, which must require as much, if not more, licking into shape than the young bears, for more ugly, uncouth little wretches, it has never been my luck to see.

Although the Canadian porcupine is a most harmless creature, still the animosity of nearly every animal that has sufficient strength is directed against it, the bear alone excepted, who invariably gives it a wide berth, and will even desert a favourite den whose sanctuary has been violated by the presence of the prickly intruder. To the wild-cat, lynx, and wolf he is a favourite prey ; but these marauders have been known to lose their lives from the spines they have had

stuck in them working their way into their brain or other vital parts. It is a strange circumstance that although dogs of European extraction suffer so severely in an attack upon these animals, the little Indian cur seldom or ever receives the slightest injury in such a rencontre.

But to revert to the bear. Sugar pronounced it a long-legged one; the reason of this being that the Indians recognise two distinct species of black bear, the short-legged or hog bear, and the long-legged. I am disposed to indorse this opinion, not from the difference of size and shape, as from their dissimilarity of character. The long-legged Bruin is a marauder, a flesh-eater by choice, sheep, hogs, and even young horned cattle being favourite articles of his diet; and, although he will generally avoid human beings, still if his temper has been ruffled, or his larder at low ebb, there is no saying, but just a possibility that he may force himself upon your acquaintance. At this season of the year a reason may be that they are prone to forget their good manners, for they have only lately returned to society after a long and protracted fast.

The settlers on the outskirts of civilisation know this to their cost, if they permit their calves and sheep to wander far from the homestead; for if mooin



comes across them he will not long hesitate to provide himself with an ample meal.

I am not fond of finikin little jobs, but unless I attend and assist in the canoe mending, I know that Master Red-skin will but indifferently perform his labour; for although he is willing enough when I am present, leave him half an hour to himself, and the charm of digging out a wood-chuck, or exhuming a ground squirrel are so attractive, that he appears unable to resist the temptation. After all, he is but a child, and with less faults than many of our civilised ones. Thus I found myself at work on the canoe, sewing up rents, putting in ribs, and ultimately plastering with gum every portion of the outer skin that exhibited a doubtful appearance. Before the sun set I had the satisfaction to learn that my labour was rewarded; for after paddling up and down the stream for half an hour her interior was as dry as a bone. So, please Providence, I shall try the trout to-morrow.

The next day broke gloomy and overcast, with rather a thick mist hanging on the surface of the water; this was scarcely promising, but by half-past nine the sun burst forth, and a gentle easterly wind sprung up, clearing off the fog as if by magic.

Commencing at the rapid above the shanty, I

fished down to where the canoe lay ready for launching, a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, taking seven fine trout, averaging over two pounds each.

With my light tackle and rod they afforded me over an hour's splendid sport; and I was much indebted to Sugar for the skilful manner in which he handled the landing-net. All who are proficient with the fly-rod know how much depends upon your attendant in this department; and of all proficient I have met with, to this youth I yield the palm. Skill in all descriptions of field sports is inherent in the Indian; through successive generations they have cultivated it, their progenitors of hundreds of years ago believing, as their descendants do now, that to be a successful hunter is the acme of human accomplishments.

When about to step into the canoe the two Indian girls from Schubert Lake (for such Antoine said it was named) joined us. I thought that they had brought word from him, for he started in that direction, and had been gone now nearly three weeks, he having exhibited a *penchant* for the younger girl, who, although only sixteen, was a woman in size and form.

"Good day, Capen," chattered both, as they came out on the pebbly beach from the woods. "I hopes

you well, and have plenty good hunt, plenty everything," continued the duo.

"Thanks, thanks! have you seen Antoine?" I responded, addressing myself to the elder.

At this apparently innocent question, the long dark eyes of the girl seemed to dilate with suppressed emotion. Then drawing herself up to the extent of her height, a wonderful improvement to her previously indolent-looking figure, and tossing her head, with an air worthy of any Indian queen, she indignantly replied :

"Antoine, Antoine! what I care about him. He not warrior, he not chief, he not good hunter. Ask this squaw for him," pointing to her sister. "White man, like Antoine, no better than woman; he only paddle canoe, and cut the tree for Englishman" (alluding to his being a lumberman). "What I! I! child of chief's child no care about such sort;" and with additional indignation, "I bait wolf trap with such as him," looking with contempt upon her companion, whom I now learned, for the first time, was only her half-sister, and who appeared to cower under her indignant associate's angry glance.

A more perfect piece of acting I never saw. Madame Celeste as Naomi would have been nowhere by her side, although this embryo heroine was draped

in the ordinary, unattractive Indian costume of dirty blankets.

It was not difficult to see that this proud damsel was offended; for her bust heaved, the large tendons of her neck stood out swollen in relief, while her eye still retained the light of suppressed angry emotion.

Making some humbugging, meaningless excuse about not desiring to offend her—that she had entirely misunderstood me—I ordered Sugar to shove the canoe on shore and stepped out upon the beach. The younger girl willingly shook hands with me, the elder turning her side to my advances refused every overture I made for the re-establishment of good feeling.

At length the younger squaw produced from underneath her blanket a basket of swamp cranberries, a most acceptable addition to our cuisine, saying at the same time, “My present.”

Knowing well that the Indian never gives without expecting a return, I asked both to the shanty, where I had some trifling Brummagem trinkets laid in stock for such occasions. The donor of the gift followed me, but the elder stood obstinate and unrelenting, not even deigning to turn her eyes in the direction which we went.

After a trifling search—for what man without a

petticoat to look after his interests ever has his traps in order?—I turned out from the bottom of my valise a couple of rosaries of bright beads, the one having a green, the other an opaque blue cross attached. These I handed to Antoine's flame, telling her at the same time which was for her half-sister; and with these, supplemented by a small canister of coarse gunpowder as a present for her father, we took our way back to the landing-place.

On arriving there the petulant beauty had disappeared, the other girl all smiles and good nature, dashing off at a run into the woods after her recusant companion.

Before getting into the canoe, Sugar said, "Look there, Capen—there—on that sapling—don't you see?" And at last I discovered what he alluded to; a beautiful pair of moccasins, lined throughout with squirrel skin; left, as the boy said, doubtless repeating the words of the donor, "for the Capen, as he have no squaw to work for him."

This rencontre was certainly amusing, to say the least of it, and as I moralised while paddling up the stream on what the dark-skinned daughter of the forest would look like in crinoline, panier, and chignon, I came to the conclusion that the costume of Lady Godiva was far better suited to her graceful form.

Indian women when old are excessively ugly, their figures becoming bent and slouching, doubtless the result of the heavy loads they have to carry, for the brunt of transportation across portages, packing home game, and paddling the canoes falls upon them, and these restless people are ever changing their quarters. But among the young girls, who do little or nothing till mated, one will occasionally see a figure the perfection of human form, and with hands and feet, which for size and symmetry would outrival those of our best bred votary of fashion.



## CHAPTER XI.

TWO hours' fishing, commencing about a mile above the shanty, was rewarded with nearly two dozen trout, the largest being quite six pounds. My sport was excellent, and when a fish rose he meant it, gulping the fly down with such vigour, that you could actually hear the process. One of my captives, a fine deep made fellow that would have turned the scales at four pounds, missed the fly in his first break, from the circumstance that I was in the act of lifting the line from the water preparatory to making a fresh cast when he rose. In my second effort, however, I hooked him, not in the mouth, but in the flank near the vent. Fortune, however, favoured me, for the water was comparatively still, the river here being expanded to nearly double its usual breadth. Of course I lost much time before my attendant got him in the net ; but that was not to be grumbled at, for if

this little episode had occurred in a rapid, I must have smashed some of my tackle. For some time after getting fast to this fish, I was under the impression that he was a leviathan, for all the strain I dare put on the rod and line would not raise him an inch from the bottom where he kept circling round in the most clockwork like manner; but it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and the game golden-flanked beauty ultimately found that to his cost.

Several times while fishing I obtained a good view of a large otter; he doubtless was well aware of my vicinity, for he confined his marauding exploits to the pool above, where his exertions appeared to be indefatigable and most successful. This river really swarms with these destructive gentry, and the amount of havoc they commit amongst the fish must be enormous, for frequently I pick up trout of several pounds out of which only a couple of mouthfuls appear to have been taken, and that invariably from the same place, the thick of the back between the extremity of the skull and the first spine of the dorsal fin.

The colour of the trout in this river is remarkably beautiful, quite equal to those I have captured in the State of Maine; in form they are shorter and thicker in proportion to their length, and I am under the

impression, stronger and more active in consequence.

The various colourings, lights and shadows up this river (which here flows by compass from nearly due south to north), are most beautiful when the sun gets towards the horizon, and the perfect stillness that reigns around fairly entitle it to the soubriquet of the Lone River. It will be many years before the steps of civilisation reach here, for the soil is generally too stony for the agriculturalist to select, while lands without this objection, further to the south, where winter of course is less severe, are still waiting for occupiers.

Again, although the hillsides are clothed with an abundance of noble timber, the lumberman will long give this neighbourhood a wide berth, for without the assistance of dams they never could succeed in floating their logs down to the parent stream, which every stick of timber must reach ere it be convertible into money. But this immunity to the forest monarchs will not last for ever, for when the lordly pines have been cleared off from more accessible places, capital and labour will be brought into play, and ugly unsightly barriers will be erected, changing the rapid and eddying pool into sullen ponds and the summer haunt of the moose into a swamp.

Then the saw-mill will follow to awake the echoes

with its monotonous and incessant groaning at the constant labour expected from it by its hard task-master of an owner ; and the now clear pellucid water will bear upon its fair bosom tons of sawdust, poisoning with its resinous qualities every hole and reach of the river's course, till not a fish is left where thousands had previously existed.

Go on ! go on ! thou march of civilisation ; destroy all that is beautiful and pure in nature ; change the untrodden and uncontaminated wilds into a second Black district if you will, where the sons of toil are as unattractive as the country they labour and sweat in ; where human pig-styes are jumbled together in such numbers that the air stinks of them ; till the day come when the adage of " dog eat dog " be verified, from the superabundance of the human population upon earth.

On our course homewards numerous hooded mergansers (a very scarce bird in Europe) passed us, winging their way westward ; as many were alone, nesting has doubtless commenced in earnest. A beautiful bird in plumage, they are remarkably swift upon the wing, but totally unfit for food, except when killed in the flapper state, for the flesh afterwards becomes fishy and tough as fiddle-strings.

Paddling a canoe has this advantage over rowing,

you sit facing the direction in which you proceed, enabling you to see all that transpires in front. Thus Master Sugar, who was in the bow, called my attention to a rock near which we had to pass; on its surface was a large otter, and at his feet a dead trout of several pounds weight. This poacher I have often seen before, or one of his relatives, for the stone on which he rests is not more than three hundred yards above the shanty, and frequently to enjoy an out-door pipe I come thus far. Bending forward cautiously, I soon disengage my gun from its covering; but the loutre, as the boy calls it, is too wide awake by half, for long before we come within shooting distance, he has glided noiselessly under the surface of the water. It is utterly useless to fire long shots at these animals, for they are gifted with extraordinary vitality; the trap therefore is the only way to destroy them, for they are so exceedingly wary that it is but by the merest accident you can ever come within short range.

“Sugar, I’ll give you half a cup of molasses if you catch that fellow,” I said.

“I try very hard; suppose you lend me trap.”

This I promised to do, and I am not without hope that ere long I shall see my copper-coloured companion dressing the otter’s hide, for now the canoe is

afloat there is little difficulty in reaching this rock which appears to be his favourite resting-place.

Antoine's long absence begins to make me feel alarmed for his safety; not that he is much of a companion, and far from loquacious, unless when his tongue is caused to wag through the stimulating effects of a strong glass of whisky, when he becomes a new man and will jabber with the volubility of a French Canadian, which is surely saying enough, of the Yellowstone and Yoesemmite Valley, of the Apache and the Blackfoot Indians, of the Santa-Fé trail, and the Hudson Bay forts, but never a word about his future hopes and aspirations; no, that subject is sealed to him even when, as the Yankees say, he is as drunk as a biled owl. That he is arranging, if still alive—and he is not a likely man to meet an accident—some grand movement on the chess-board of his future life, I am perfectly certain. Nevertheless, with all his faults I miss his weather-beaten face and nervous unsteady eye.

As fishing will probably occupy my attention for some time to come, and as the prospects are that the take will be large, after a careful inspection of the neighbouring trees I discovered one which with a little labour could be converted into an admirable smoke-house, for by this process of curing I hope to



be able to save a large proportion of the trout which otherwise must certainly become lost. Although I can handle an axe fairly for an old countryman, still I am not a good chopper—far from it, and it is a description of labour that assorts worse than all others with my stiff drilled back; thus you may imagine I had no love for such work. Shirking my allotted job as long as I could, I finally became ashamed of myself, and set to impulsively and with a great deal more than the requisite vigour, as non-persevering people invariably do. First a stage had to be built about fourteen feet from the ground, so as to enable the tree to be cut off at the requisite height; it took the greater portion of a day to see this part of the labour satisfactorily performed. Sugar was the first to ascend the new structure, and with evident satisfaction, after tapping the stem around, informed me that the shell was thinner up there than at the base. Next day the youngster's words were verified, for a couple of hours' labour, about equally divided between us, laid the monarch of the woods upon mother earth, from whence it had probably taken hundreds of years to raise his once towering head. As this tree was perfectly dead, with fire and axe we soon cleared off the *débris* that surrounded the intended smoke-house, for the proximity of a brush-heap

would have formed a most acceptable hiding-place for any thieving denizen of the forest, who might possess covetous intentions towards our stores. Then an aperture in the side of the standing stump was made, sufficient for a man to enter, and cross pieces pegged against the interior for the rods to rest upon from which the fish hung. Each day we added to our store till the place was full, and Master Sugar disgusted, for to him I intrusted the interior management of this useful domestic adjunct, no very agreeable task, for he invariably returned from it as black as any London chimney-sweep.

Anticipating that some wandering Bruin might be attracted to the smoke-house by the pleasant odours that arose therefrom, I had both the door and roof closed with the heaviest materials that could be utilised for the purpose, for I had no desire, after all the trouble and time I had spent, to provide food with or without your leave, for strangers, let alone wild beasts.

Some days after the last-named job was over, I was sitting in the shanty enjoying my pipe, for I had been fishing in the morning, when Poteen and Skye raised such a hullabaloo that I left my sanctuary to see the cause of the disturbance. Of this I was not long kept in ignorance, for on the beach close

to where the canoe lay stood one of the largest moose I had previously ever seen. Almost with stolid indifference he regarded the dogs, only occasionally lifting a foot to kick or strike them, when they approached closer than he thought their presence desirable. Hoping the animal had not seen me I ran for my gun, but when I returned he had gone, doubtless having winded me, as the current of air though light was moving directly in the reverse direction to what would have been desirable. If there is anything in this world that can go through timber like a large bull moose, except an elephant, I am ignorant of its existence.

For several minutes I could hear the huge creature breaking through the dead-wood and undergrowth, his pace doubtlessly being accelerated by the sharp teeth of Poteen, who from the dash of colley blood he possesses never lost an opportunity of trying his tusks on the hind-legs of a retreating foe.

I was rather grieved at losing such a chance of replenishing my supplies, more particularly as what we could not use fresh would have been improved by a week in the smoke-house. Moreover, the brute's coat appeared in fine condition, the greater part of last year's hair having fallen being indicated by the darkness of its present colour.

The fresh antlers, too, were only half-developed, and as I wanted such a set of horns in the moss, to add to other trophies, I felt that I had made rather a bungle of the whole affair, which might so easily have been obviated by following a rule I had a thousand times formed mentally, viz., not to stir abroad when a clamour was raised by my four-footed companions, without taking my double-barrel with me.

## CHAPTER XII.

MOSQUITOES, which made their appearance a few days since, are now becoming numerous, with an occasional black-fly added to their bloodthirsty phalanxes. I quite expect these pests to increase till they become unbearable, when I intend to shut up house, and start for the high grounds that lie a good hundred miles to the north, that is if any reliance can be placed on what Antoine and the principal hunter at Schubert Lake say.

Two days after having seen the moose, I was again aroused about noon by Poteen and Skye striving to outvie each other in their vocal powers. Pulling down my gun from its perch, I carefully left the house to take an observation, but instead of finding that game was the object of their wrath, I discovered that it was an Indian dog in the society of the dusky forest beauties. Onwards they came tripping, all radiant with smiles, and apparently in the very best

of humours, the elder sister not excepted, till near enough to salute me with the well-known term Capen, after which both held out their hands, with a certain amount of timidity attached to the movement, indicating that it was a mode of salutation unknown to their race until thrown into contact with the pale-faced intruders on their lands.

My visitors' names I never could remember, for in each there were about a dozen syllables, so I determined to re-christen them. On our way back to the shanty I ransacked my memory for suitable appellations. In my opinion white-swans, deer-foots, wild-ducks, blue-birds, and laughing-waters, had been done to death, so I settled upon Saucy for the elder and Fatty-plumpy for the junior. I explained to them in the best manner I could, much to the merriment of Master Sugar, who had just returned with a young owl that he had abducted from its parents, that from some inexplorable formation in an Englishman's jaw, he was unable to string a quantity of syllables together like Wa-ha-sa-bunk-a-suck, &c., and that in future if they honoured me with their presence, they should be known to the reader's humble servant by the names I have already mentioned. I was scarcely prepared to be questioned upon what their respective new appellations meant;



but when I found this was the first query each made, well—then I had to make a virtue of necessity, and go through a piece of acting, a thing I never could do in my life to the satisfaction of an English audience, although several times attempted ; however, I had a hope that these primitive children of the lone land would not be such fastidious critics as their civilised sisters.

Rising from my seat, for we had entered the shanty, I pointed to the elder. Putting emphasis on the word Saucy, I said, "Saucy means," and then found myself at a full stop. "Confound it," thought I to myself, "brace yourself together, an old stager like you to be nonplussed in this way is absurd. Come, 'go in for the acting. Your critics have never seen Vestris, Mrs. Stirling, or Agnes Robertson, and therefore it is out of their power to make comparisons which are odious." "True, oh king!" I responded to my argument (of course *sotto voce*), and with additional force I pronounced the word "Saucy." Grave and earnest remained my audience. This was reassuring—a titter would have done for me. Then I went through, mind you, without discredit to myself, the most difficult of any one to please, all the charming, attractive, impudent, yet nice ways of a petulant, saucy girl. I didn't do

it by halves when once I was started, but entered into the spirit of the thing. At one moment I pretended with my left to take the right hand, then either affectedly drew it away, or smacked the objectionable paw for its attempted presumption; then I assumed a countenance as if some one was speaking to me, and sharply turned my back as if I desired no further converse with them; finally winding up with several stamps of my feet, at the same time assuming the most indignant expression of countenance I could muster for the occasion, beckoning with both my hands as if to repel the nearer approach of some invisible stranger.

Would you believe it, although a knowledge of the *claque* has not yet reached this neighbourhood, I received by look and gesture immense approbation, so subsided into a seat and rested complacently upon my well-earned laurels.

Fatty-plumpy and Sugar chaffed Saucy immensely, yet the proud Indian girl took it all in good part, and joined in the merriment with as much gusto as the others.

After a fair allowance of time for the effects of my previous eloquence to pass off, I again rose to my legs, when my audience became such attentive listeners, that their gravity was almost fatal to my

equanimity. "Oh, what an example!" I hear he who struts the mimic stage exclaim, if one of such should ever read this book ; but I doubt it much, for I never met a knight of the sock and buskin either in the hunting-field, among the heather, or in the golden stubbles, so as a class I fear they are not lovers of rural life, so scarcely likely to see this. Well, to the younger sister, looking steadily in the girl's face, I said, "Fatty-plumpy means this;" I blew my cheeks out, stuck a representative of a pillow inside my coat, and waddled up and down the limited space that was unoccupied. Again the audience were convulsed, and I, satisfied with my efforts, again took my seat, causing my countenance to assume more than the usual severity of expression ; for far from it was my desire to allow my hearers to imagine that a great mind like mine could be in the slightest degree affected by such frivolities. However, I found it hard to keep my gravity, so I braced myself till I looked like adamant, if such an expression is correct, for although I have heard the simile I do not remember ever to have seen the article. And when the strain upon my muscles required relaxing, I lit a pipe ; for when expelling smoke from your mouth or nostrils any contortion of features is supposed to be necessary to attain the end desired.

For some minutes complete silence reigned among

my guests, when the elder sister rose, and advancing towards me displayed upon her neck the cross that I had sent by her sister, the younger one immediately following suit; and I had the gratification of knowing from the position where the baubles rested, that their recipients highly valued my trumpery gifts.

As I could not give away my gewgaws every day, and they had doubtless an abundance at home of fish and venison, I ransacked my brain to find out what I could offer my guests. Sugar's love of molasses at once struck me as a probable weakness of the young ladies; so I poured upon three birch-bark plates about a table-spoonful and handed the delicacy to each. Their enjoyment of it was truly delightful and refreshing to look at, but not having finger-glasses and table-napkins to place at their service, their physiognomies afterwards, although a little less so from the colour that nature had given them, reminded me of a tiddy-widdy, darling little duck-a-daisy, that a would-be successful candidate for a seat in Parliament must kiss, or for ever after lose the goodwill of a doating mother, and through her an affectionate father's vote.

As the afternoon was advancing and the day promised sport, I determined to go up the river a mile or so and fish home. My guests accompanied me to the canoe, but instead of biding adieu when we em-

barked, Saucy proposed my expelling Sugar, and taking his place; so pleased was the youngster that he got out into the water without asking permission, as if my acceptance was a matter of course. In a few moments I had him seated again, when I assured the ladies that I preferred at present paddling my own canoe. Still something appeared to be on their minds which they wished to say, for no movement did they make to indicate their intention to depart. Saucy, however, broke the ice.

“You got no squaw; me be your squaw.”

“And me,” said Fatty-plumpy.

It never rains but it pours; two wives offered a *lone lone* man in the space of a minute; there must be some deep, deep design underneath all this impenetrable to my opaque brain, so I declined their offers with thanks, protesting that so serious a matter would require time for consideration, at the same time I thought it advisable to remind Fatty-plumpy that Antoine was her admirer, at which she snapped her fingers, and with more energy than grace exclaimed, “That for Antoine.”

I think, gentle reader, you will pardon me if I confess that I began to imagine that I must be a deuced good-looking fellow, or the two belles of the neighbourhood would not be in love with me at the

same time, and not only that, share my caresses between them ; but all this speculation was ruthlessly dispelled by Fatty-plumpy exclaiming, licking her already well-daubed lips :

“When you take time, Capen, and I your squaw, you give me molasses every day.”

“Good-bye girls, be virtuous and you will be happy,” I pathetically loudly but rather hurriedly exclaimed, at the same time shaking my hand as if waving a fond adieu, while I muttered *sotto voce* to Sugar :

“Dip your paddle deep you yellow-skinned young scoundrel, and get me out of this neighbourhood as soon as possible.”

The last I saw of the belles, they were young lady-like, one arm around the waist of the other, sauntering off into the woods. Would such a manner have been assumed if either had been jealous of the other? Impossible, I mentally ejaculated. Is there not food here for thought? For among all the young ladies I have had the fortune to be acquainted with, I cannot name one who would be so self-denying as to share her husband with another, *au contraire* resent his paying even a sister more than the most commonplace courtesy. Is jealousy, then, the result of education? The subject is worthy the consideration of the School Board.

The shock that my nervous system had suffered was rather too much for me, consequently I felt rather out of sorts, and without the ardour and enthusiasm necessary to enjoy my fishing; ultimately I lost my casting-line, finally broke the tip of my rod, so I desisted from further efforts against the trout, considering I had gone through enough that day for one man.

That evening I hurriedly ate my meal and looked forward to a long and sound night's rest, but everything appeared determined to oppose my desire. First my favourite pipe took a fit of obstinacy and would not draw; that having been rectified so as to put it out of its power to repeat such objectionable conduct, it refused to burn the tobacco evenly, and permitted the ash and essential oil to pass into my mouth by wholesale. In disgust I immediately selected another to fulfil its office, and the new broom happily swept clean; then Sugar would chatter, so I snubbed the boy, and he in consequence pouted, and I felt disgusted with myself at my heartless conduct. "I have it," thought I; "I am about to have my old complaint, fever and ague." So I forthwith mixed a very strong and hot mug of whisky-punch. I felt an improvement after it had been drunk, so I turned into my crib without delay, and was soon in



the land of dreams, playing the character of pasha of an unlimited number of tails with a harem around me that formed a perfect galaxy of beauty—when bow-wow went Skye, and Poteen joined in with all the power his lungs would afford him.

It was no use trying to silence them, calling them by rotation good dogs or shying whatever I could lay my hand upon would not pacify the wretches, so most unwillingly I got up, my movement being forestalled by Sugar, who was endeavouring to obtain a light from the smouldering embers that faintly indicated where the fire had existed.

“What the deuce is it?” I asked.

“Me think bear at the smoke-house; I hear log tumble off it.”

So slipping on such garments as were necessary, I was prepared to sally forth, gun in hand, followed by the boy armed with a second, and who had received instructions to place it in my hands if I failed to give the aggressor his quietus with two barrels.

No sooner was the door open, than after their manner both dogs rushed frantically off, and in a few seconds afterwards there was such a row as woke up the most distant echoes, as well as every owl who was within miles. There was no mistaking this time; something was at the smoke-house that had no right in its

vicinity; whatever it was I knew it was receiving a sharp reception, for the intonation of Skye's voice, and of Poteen's also, he having gained pluck by the little one's example, plainly told that they were playing no game of romps.

The night, although no moon was up, still was brilliant with the light of innumerable stars, and thus eminently suited for the task before us. As we approached the smoke-house the din of battle seemed to recede from it, obvious indication that the thief was attempting to make off, so I hallooed to the dogs to encourage them, and in response to my voice theirs increased in anger. A kind of intuitive fear seemed to steal over me that Skye would get mauled, for I now had no longer doubt but that it was a bear, and I knew the little fellow's foolhardy pluck would induce him to run into the very jaws of death, so I ran, almost flew, over logs, through brush, till I was within a few yards of the combatants.

"There he is, Cap," called Sugar; "don't you see? —there—there."

And at last I did see Master Bruin ascending a tree, good six feet off the ground, and rapidly increasing his distance from the earth, with Skye hanging to his rump, and Poteen no way backwards, snapping at the enemy as long as he remained within reach. The

position and the shadows were such that I could not shoot with precision, and I dreaded only to wound the creature for the sake of my dogs. One thing certain, he was an enormous fellow, and now that he was in my power I was determined to have him.

Thirteen or fourteen feet from the ground a branch projected from the parent stem; on reaching this the bear shifted his position, as if to take stock of the enemy, and my little favourite let go his hold and dropped to the ground apparently none the worse for his exertions.

Bruin evidently did not like our looks, so he resolved to place more distance between himself and his enemies, so recommenced his ascent. What between the uncertainty of the light, the heavy shadows and the foliage overhead, move as I would, I could not get a clean shot. So I sent Sugar to the shanty for my ground rug, blanket, pipe and tobacco, for I determined to delay the battle till daylight, unless forced upon me earlier.

In a quarter of an hour the boy was back, ten minutes more his skilful hands had lit a fire, and we sat down to watch that the foe did not steal a march upon us.

Several times I caught myself dozing, but when I pulled myself together I could see the young Indian's

snake-like eyes firmly fixed upon a dark mass in the overhead foliage, while the two dogs sat restlessly by the fire, leaving every few moments its grateful light and heat, to prevent the misappropriator of their master's goods from escaping his due reward.

A fire in the dense forest at midnight is a peculiar and impressive scene; one to be remembered if once witnessed, not to be imagined if never seen. To do it justice by description is impossible, for as varied as are the forms of the dancing blaze, as numerous are the weird shadows that flit around whenever the light becomes uncertain.

Time, like many other things, is obstinate, and lags on the way when supplicated to hasten its flight. On this occasion it behaved even worse than usual. At length I knew daybreak was near, for the owls commenced in loud voice to lament that their nocturnal forays were near an end for that night.

From far, far away, floated a weird-like yell, which even distance had not mellowed. I looked inquiringly to Sugar for information. "That," said he, "is the lucifee" (*anglicè*, bay lynx). I should not have required to ask the question, for many a time it has made my heart's blood run cold by the suddenness with which this animal would give vent to its unearthly voice.

“ I suspect mooin like very much to come down. See, Capen, he going to try ;” and sure enough there was every indication that such was the bear’s intention.

“ I wish the brute would remain where he is half an hour longer,” I exclaimed.

“ So he will,” said my companion, “ if you not like shoot yet.” On which he pulled a brand from the fire and rattled it against the trunk of the tree, and sure enough mooin settled down in his original position.

So inherent is a knowledge of the habits of wild animals in the Red-man, that even their children know intuitively what it is necessary to do in their pursuit to obtain any desired result. The white man who spends a life in the wilderness, may be able to kill more game than an Indian hunter, but it is because he is invariably better armed, and always superior as a shot ; but try which can, undetected, approach closest to a cariboo or moose, or follow them when wounded through the intricacies of a hemlock or cedar swamp, and the snake-visioned aborigine will be so immeasurably superior as to make comparison absurd.

Slowly at first, but with increasing rapidity, the night gives way to day. Bruin’s position and atti-

tude can be clearly defined; fresh charges are placed in each barrel, so as to insure against a hang or misfire, and I raise my large gun to my shoulder, take a steady but not protracted aim, and as the trigger is pressed the bear falls forward, slides down a few feet, clings for a moment, and then falls to the earth with a heavy thud. Both dogs in a moment are upon him; but as I feared, their temerity cost them dearly, for Poteen received a blow which knocked him off his legs, and caused him to sing out most lustily.

A second shot I fire into the enraged brute at a distance of seven or eight yards; but instead of incapacitating the bear from further exertion, it seems to imbue him with additional ferocity. On me his hate is now centred; the lad shoves the second gun into my hand, and the plucky boy has done it none too soon, for already my foe has risen on his hind legs to grasp me; but my ball this time does its work, entering the head under the chin close to its junction with the neck, and Bruin rolls over backwards, belching forth mouthfuls of his heart's blood. The strife is over, and I the winner; but after all with little to boast of, although much to be thankful for, for if Sugar's heart had failed him, or my last shot had not been so well placed—

well, I should doubtless have received an embrace more earnest than affectionate.

My trophy I should deem was quite four hundred pounds weight, although far from fat; extremely old, judging from his teeth and claws, and quite a veteran, if an opinion could be formed from the numerous scars upon his head and neck.

The hide was far from being in good order, nevertheless sufficiently serviceable to make an excellent rug, if such should be required in the following winter.

After an unusual amount of excitement there is sure to be a reaction, and I believe all the coterie, dogs included, and even myself, felt little inclined for more exercise that day; so the hours fled in that lethargic, unmarked manner that causes one to look back with astonishment upon the passage of time, and wonder how on earth it can be so late, for late it certainly is, when I find the sun is scarcely an hour high above the western forest line.

As my rod was together, and casting-line attached, I picked it up and sauntered off to the throat of the pool. The second or third cast I rose and hooked a very lively fish about four pounds, which took at least ten minutes to land. A few more throws convinced me that the trout were unusually "well on



the feed," so I went up stream several hundred yards, so as to leave the pool at the shanty door undisturbed, for it was a wonderful handy little preserve if a few fresh fish were wanted for a meal.

Two flies on my leader I found more than requisite, so I took off my dropper, retaining for trail what is familiarly known throughout Canada as the Montreal fly; its principal colour is grey, slightly ornamented with a few strands of scarlet ibis feather, and will generally be found very killing upon all Dominion waters early in the season.

An advantage that North American trout-fishing possesses over British, is that much larger hooks are used, and thus much easier to be traced correctly by the eye in their passage through the water.

A more lovely sunset than occurred on that evening, I cannot but once recall. On the occasion I allude to I had rested on the southern shores of Lake Ontario after a long and successful day's fishing, and when the sun dropped behind the placid pure waters of the lake, the heavens were illuminated to the zenith with the most brilliant vermilion clouds; to-night it was nearly the same, and the light after old Sol had hid his face looked softened and coloured as if it had passed through a gigantic window of Bohemian glass.

There was but one drawback to the pleasure the observer can revel in if he loves nature seen to such advantage, viz., the black-flies and mosquitoes, which are commencing to be troublesome. However, the former disappear when the chill of the night air commences to be felt, the latter on the contrary seem to regard the additional cold as a stimulant to their appetite.

When the shadows had increased to such a length as to blend into one undefined dark mass, I heard a sound proceeding from a clump of spruce-trees in my rear with which my ear was very familiar, but so far I had been unable to discover what bird or quadruped produced it. The sound is a peculiar whine, which might with a little stretch of imagination be taken for that of a puppy. Leaving my rod stuck upright in the soil, I slowly stole into the bush and stalked towards the place from whence I thought the unknown notes issued. Almost arriving at my destination a couple of Tewgmalm's owls took flight and crossed the river. Still doubting that they could be the origin of the strange call, I had the uncertainty dispelled by soon hearing the whining voice proceed from their new resting-place. At this season of the year the numerous species of *Strigidæ* are incessantly engaged from sunset to daybreak hunting for their

favourite prey in the darkest and most dismal parts of the forest ; even hares are not too large to escape their attention, but on emergency they can put up with moles, mice, and even frogs for their diet.

One of the most destructive of this numerous family is the Virginian or eagle-owl, whose courage is quite equal to its strength—for I doubt if there is anything from a cat downwards that it will not assault, and so extraordinary is the power of its claws, that woe even to grimalkin if they are fastened on his back.

Their call notes, for they have two, are impressive, not easily forgotten, but far from agreeable, one resembling the yelling of a maniac in the throes of his agony. Many a time when on the trail after the path had become indistinct from the sombre gloom of the dense foliage overhead, I have been startled, almost my blood made run cold, by this fiendish maniacal yell suddenly bursting on my ear.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ANTOINE, my French Canadian, not having returned, I begin to fear that he must have got into trouble, or found new companions; although sometimes sceptical on the sincerity of his protestations of friendship, still his appearance about the shanty makes the place much less solitary. Moreover, at night, whether he has been spending the day fishing, shooting, or trapping, he has something to narrate in reference to his success or day's adventures.

Another advantage that his presence afforded was, that in half an hour he could cut up as much firewood as it took Sugar or myself double the time to accomplish, and the consumption of that useful article far advanced in the season as we now are, is not inconsiderable. However, I must remain satisfied till I go to Schudic Lake, for it is more than probable

that some of the Indians there will be able to give me information of his whereabouts.

I had been employed all the morning fly-tying, as I wish to be provided with a good stock before starting for the ridges, and every day seems to increase the duties to be attended to, and is likely to do so up to the date of our departure.

Shortly before commencing to cook our mid-day meal, the Indian boy, who had returned from the river with a bucket of water, informed me that Poteen, who always followed the lad as a shadow, "had been nearly eat up by biggestest of wolves." However, the dog looked all right, although certainly his countenance indicated that he had been alarmed. On questioning my attendant I found that a wolf had made a dash from the cover near the boat-house at Poteen, and but for the lad seizing a stick and rushing to the rescue, I should have probably lost his valuable services. Taking down my gun I went out with the hope of obtaining a shot, and although I searched all the most likely places in the vicinity I could not catch a view of the marauder. I was much annoyed at this visit, for I felt convinced it would not be the last, and that probably my pet Skye would be picked up by the grey scoundrel and carried off before I should have a chance to interfere, for it is a

most extraordinary thing that a wolf seems to prefer a dog to all other prey, even excepting young pig. As the canoe required some caulking I devoted the afternoon to that purpose. My gun I did not hesitate to take with me, as Skye was my companion, and I felt doubtful whether the visitor of the morning was not lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood.

I had almost completed my labour when my favourite became uneasy, every few minutes advancing towards the bushes, barking for an instant vehemently, and then returning to my side. Pretending to continue intensely occupied, I kept my eyes fixed upon the suspicious locality, having shifted my position so as to be able to lay my hands on my double-barrel at the shortest possible notice. However, I could discern nothing, but this did not reassure me, for too well was I aware of the stealthy nature of the animal I supposed was concealed close by.

I thought and thought, still I could devise no means that promised the desired object of making him show himself, so I resolved gun in hand to make a rush with the hope that the rapidity of my movement would take the intruder by surprise, and thus give me an opportunity to get a shot at him as he sneaked off. I waited for a few minutes; Skye, who

had advanced again towards the suspicious neighbourhood, still barking with more hurry and greater indications of fear than heretofore, rushed hurriedly back to my side. Now or never I mentally exclaimed, and dashed into the brush ; once in it the undergrowth was not so close, and from this circumstance I got a good view of the skulker. Bang, bang went both barrels as quick as thought, and the object of my aim lay struggling in the dust—both barrels had been fired at a range of less than twenty-five yards, and the heavy shot they contained had done fearful execution. The position that the animal was in when first covered, caused him to get the charge fore and aft, which resulted in the hair and hide being much destroyed.

This was one of the largest wolves I have ever seen, the true grey timber breed, and very closely allied to the north of Europe representative of the race. From the very worn and decayed state of his teeth I should imagine he was quite a veteran in years, and his plump well-fed carcase plainly said he had been living on the fat of the land. At this season of the year, from the quantity of birds and animals that are breeding, I expect they have little difficulty in obtaining food, but the destruction of life to satisfy the wants of an animal gifted with so insatiable an appetite must be enormous.



My success on this occasion was most satisfactory, for after becoming aware of this wolf's visit I never would have left home without feeling uneasy that one of the dogs would be carried off in my absence.

Sugar's delight knew no bounds, and never previously did I see a carcass more rapidly skinned than this one under his skilful hands. A curious circumstance and worthy of mention is that two porcupine's quills were discovered in the wolf, one buried over an inch in the muscles of the neck, the other nearly as far, but running longitudinally in the cheek. After all my boy's exertions the hide was not worth the trouble bestowed upon it, for it was sadly deficient of hair and tremendously riddled with the shot, so both it and the carcass were taken into the rapids and committed to their safe keeping.

The latitude up here is too high for many different families of snakes to be found; but there is one species very abundant, whose thick form and sluggish appearance indicate that at least he is well-fed. In more than colour and proportions it resembles the water viper; in fact if it was not that this reptile is not venomous, I should pronounce them to be the same. In length they are from four to five feet, of a dark chocolate colour, large in the head, and do not terminate in a fine-pointed tail. In wet grass land on the margin of water they are most

numerous, in fact, so much so that a dozen may be seen in the course of an hour. I am sure the poor frogs that live in this vicinity must pass an anxious time, for I suppose they are their principal food, at the same time it appears impossible that this sluggish reptile can capture one of them otherwise than by surprise. Sugar, who is devoted to bait-fishing, and looks with eyes of contempt on my artificial flies, which he calls "a mosquito fixing," seldom returns after spending some hours at his favourite amusement without announcing the intelligence that "he catchee one darn'd big snake." As his bait is invariably a shiner, a beautiful bright little fish like a dace, it is evident that these reptiles have a penchant for fish; but their velocity should prevent them often becoming victims.

These remarks were induced from my having visited the marsh that I have previously spoken of, to see if snipe were still abundant. Such is not the case, the preponderating number doubtless having proceeded further northward to breed, those that remain being similarly engaged. After a great deal of searching I discovered a nest with only two eggs in it; these I removed to make some notes upon, that I may be able at a future date to find out if they and those of our English snipe exactly agree.

The wild-duck's nest discovered on my last visit, I found deserted. From portions of broken shell scattered around the vicinity, I have little doubt but that the fond mother succeeded in hatching her brood, and probably now is secreted with her progeny in some of the neighbouring beds of rushes.

June 10.—This afternoon the flies are fearfully troublesome; not for a moment would they give me rest; the result is that both my hands and face are swollen excessively, causing me to suffer intense irritation. I can put up with a great deal of inconvenience, fatigue, and annoyance, but the persecution of these wretches makes me irritable and discontented.

An hour before sunset I visited the river; the fourth or fifth cast I made rose a large fish, which I hooked. This trout was wonderfully strong and active, thus requiring all my attention. I believe the black-flies and mosquitoes are aware of the helplessness of my position when fast to a large fish, for they surround me in clouds, and feed upon every exposed portion of my person. At such a time to smack your face you dare not, or your rod, or line, or both would be smashed, so I submitted, but not with a good grace, to be eaten alive. I doubt if Job would. If one could discover a means of annihilating these two

bloodthirsty races, what a benefactor he would be to the human family.

Arriving at the shanty, [Master Sugar I found busy, the two dogs watching his labour. On a log which was hewn smooth, and was invariably used for the purpose, he had a large otter stretched, and almost completely skinned. "Him worth five dollar!" he exclaimed, when I reached his side. It was the one I pointed out to the boy some weeks since in the pool above our residence; at least there he had caught it.

At length the flies have become such perfect plagues that I have determined to start for the upland barrens as soon as I can put my home in order, for I have resolved to take Master Sugar with me, although originally I had intended leaving him behind in charge of my property; but the boy looked so down-cast, so thoroughly prostrated at the mention of a separation that my heart relented, it having suddenly occurred to me that possibly he suffered as much as myself from the summer pests of the woodlands. Before informing him that I had changed my plans he hazarded in a half-timid inquiring manner the question whether the dogs would be left behind. On answering in the negative, I observed one of those peculiar pouts steal over his face, which ge-

nerally in white children precede tears, doubtless the thoughts of parting with his bedfellow and boon companion Poteen, had no small portion in the cause of the show of so much emotion.

In the State of Maine, and on the edges of the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I have found the mosquitoes and black-flies so numerous as to believe that a few more would render them beyond the endurance of human nature ; but it is surprising what human beings can put up with when compelled, for in my present abode, the air, the ground, the bushes seem to have no other employment but to produce and reproduce them in countless myriads. Besides the two pests above-mentioned, there are three more, the diminutive sand-fly, the breeze-fly, and the moose-fly ; the first is so small, that even while you feel the pain of his bite on the back of the hand, it takes close examination to discover its exact situation. It seems to sink into a pore of the skin, and the sensation it imparts to the sufferer is such as might be imagined to result from being touched with the point of a red-hot needle. The two others, although far from unwilling to pay the wanderer their delicate attentions, are much easier avoided from their size.

For the last few days I have lived in an atmo-

sphere of smoke to endeavour to persuade the persecutors to retire, and my skin in consequence feels like that of a mummy ; but all is of no avail, smudges of damp wood smouldering in-doors, out-doors, and in every available place, fail to have the desired effect. So after resisting for ever so long (much against my will, for the process is so dirty) I am compelled to smear my face, neck, and hands with oil of tar. For an hour or two after undergoing this process you have comparative rest, but the moment the perspiration commences to remove it, then the patient must undergo a fresh dressing with this filthy unguent. Friends of mine have frequently, and with the greatest confidence, recommended camphor and penny-royal, as a recipe certain to protect the sportsman ; both I have given a fair trial, and can only say, Bosh !

One thing I have found thoroughly efficacious in the house to expel these minute pests, but it cannot be obtained except by those who have made a lengthened sojourn in the woods, viz., the giant fungus stripped from the tree stems, and dried in the sun till perfectly free from the smallest particle of damp ; this is a very long process, and no other mode of drying will secure the desired result. The fungus then having been properly cured, place a piece as



big as an apple on the floor in the middle of your apartment; after having set it on fire, it will smoulder for hours, emitting rather a pungent smoke, unpleasant possibly to human beings, but infinitely preferable to the society of the insatiable bloodsuckers.

When travelling in China, I was frequently annoyed by mosquitoes, more especially if our resting-place was in the vicinity of a canal or paddy-fields; but when such was the case, the coolies would purchase from the nearest shop a substance that smouldered like a joss-stick, and which would not be lighted over a few minutes before every insect had fled.

Nor are the attacks of these pests of the American woodlands confined to man; my poor dogs suffered more, I believe, than myself. Scarcely a minute's rest did the unfortunate creatures obtain during day or night, so that from constant worry and want of sleep they became attenuated and low-spirited, while their coats stared and their eyes became bleared, indications that invariably precede hydrophobia.

So much do the moose and cariboo endure at this season of the year from the same pests, that they spend the greater portion of the twenty-four hours in the water, with only the upper portion of the head above the surface. The bears are also not exempt.



from this persecution ; in fact, one day I heard one of these animals moaning in that mumbling manner with which they appear to denote both pleasure and pain. An Indian hunter was with me at the time ; inquiring from him what was the cause, his response was :

“ Guess the flies after moooin.”

That some persons get callous to their attacks, I have no doubt, from the following incident : I was shooting ruffed grouse in a thick birch cover in the State of Maine. Although birds were abundant the flies caused me to desist. On reaching the edge of a clearing I perceived a farmer engaged in the interesting and amusing occupation of picking stones off his land. After saluting the husbandman, I remarked that the flies were fearfully bad to-day (around both his head and mine hovered thousands). “ Well, there are a few,” was his response, and immediately he reverted to his occupation as unconcerned as possible, although I would dare to bet that there were a hundred at that moment feeding upon his face, neck, and hands.

Wonderful, certainly, are the ways of Providence, for how could this unfortunate being have cultivated his five acres of stone-covered, impoverished soil if he had suffered from the attacks of mosquitoes and black-flies, as does your humble servant ? With the

evil I should not neglect to mention the good. When the sun goes down all the black-flies disappear, their absence lasting throughout the night ; not so with the mosquitoes, they revel in darkness, and their appetites, ever excellent, during the hours we devote to rest appear increased.

Another instance of the voracity and numbers of these insect pests I will mention. I have seen a brown cow turned literally black by the countless thousands of black-flies that adhered to her body, and the gratitude the poor thing would evince if a piece of damp decayed wood was lit for her to stand over, was most touching.

## CHAPTER XIV.

As it is settled that Sugar accompanies me, it is necessary that a hiding-place should be found for our surplus property, for we must start for the high grounds in the lightest of marching order. This was no very difficult matter if man's inquisitive prying propensities had alone to be dreaded, for here our race are very few and far between; but all the wild animals are imbued with so much curiosity, and with it destructiveness, that it becomes a difficult matter to guard against them. About a hundred yards from the river and nearly half a mile from the shanty was a very small cave, about the size of a subaltern's barrack-room at Chatham, or an officer's cabin in a government troop-ship. Around its entrance were scattered several blocks of granite, which with handspikes could be rolled so as to entirely close the entrance. After due consideration I decided that it

would suit my purpose; so the boy was sent up to clear it out. A flitting, as it is termed in Scotland, is never an agreeable affair, and it is extraordinary how one's property accumulates, for it took nearly an entire day transporting skins, fish, &c., to the storehouse. At length our labour was at an end, and, oh, how miserable our little home looked when we returned at evening to spend our last night within its walls. I was late in going to bed, and as I sat thinking of the past, home, companions, and foreign and far distant scenes I had visited, the logs, seats, and tables seemed to chide me for my desertion, even the wind appeared to sing a requiem of condolence with my dumb reprovers.

Day broke clear and bright, the stream merrily laughed as it danced over the rapids. A cedar-bird sung his sweet plaintive song from the topmost bough of our favourite shade tree, a hemlock spruce, and the restless blue jays and woodpeckers were busier and more loquacious than was their wont, as we launched our canoe from under the guardian branches of the graceful silver birch that formed our boat-house. Our baggage was light, so the craft was soon loaded. Sugar, Skye, and Poteen by instinct found their respective places; quietly I stepped into the stern, and with a shove of my paddle we were forced out into the

eddying river and our fragile craft danced along with the rushing current. As we doubled the point that shut out the last view of our late home, we bid it a loud but fond adieu, then dipping our paddles deep rushed into the rapids, and bounded on over the surging water that fretted itself to foam over the jagged rock obstructions that barred its course.

Schudic Lake was our destination. The Indian encampment on its margin was about ten miles from the shanty by land, twenty by water, but so great was the velocity of the current that the time necessary to reach it by either route was about the same. There I wished to leave my canoe for safe keeping, as well as endeavour to obtain among these, my nearest neighbours, a guide for the unknown regions I was about to explore. When we had passed the familiar scenes that we encountered almost daily, and where the navigation was thoroughly known, Sugar, whose duty it was to keep a sharp look-out for snags, rocks, and invisible dangers, relapsed into perfect silence—even our four-footed companions seemed oppressed with serious thoughts. With such a surrounding very out of place would have been trivial conversation, for on every side was room for wonder and admiration of the works of the Creator of the Universe. Above a clear blue

sky, beneath an emerald transparent water, on either hand rocks or gravelly bays, margined by the finest timber that nature with her bounteous hand could grow. The pine, autocrat of the forest, shuts out the distance; the balsam and spruce, no less beautiful, but of smaller stature, try to rival in height their giant brother, while the birch and maple with feathery branches dip with gentle touch the gliding water, and contrast with wonderful harmony their light-green foliage against the sombre colouring of the darker timber. The pines, the balsams, and the spruces have all the stern grandeur of the male, the birch and maple the soft attractive dalliance of the female. On our way we flush numerous wild-fowl, but my gun reposes in its cover, for I feel disinclined to mar the harmony that here exists, either by blood-shedding or disturbing the latent echoes.

Not dreaming, for sharp eye and a quick hand were in constant requisition, but pondering, thinking, we shot round a point, leaving the rapid and entering a placid, quiet pool. Our sudden appearance was so unexpected that a bull moose who was floating with completely submerged body, gazed at us with wondering eyes for several moments, ere it appeared to flash across his brain that the neighbourhood of the new comers was dangerous in the extreme to his safety. With a

lunge forward like a rearing horse he struck bottom with his hind-feet. A repetition of the action took him into shallow water, when shaking the spray from his glossy dark hide he rapidly trotted off into the friendly shelter of the neighbouring wood. Ample time was afforded me to have killed this deer, but not being short of provisions I let him go, much to the chagrin of my red-skinned companion.

In alluding to this animal, I say trotted off: other representatives of the genus would have galloped, or more correctly speaking, bounded away; but in all my experience I have never seen the moose do so. Their gait is a trot, and a wonderfully swift one when pressed; but I do not think, from physical formation, that they can gallop.

Only one authority that I know of notices this peculiarity, Captain Hardy, of the Royal Artillery, and in a foreign periodical devoted to natural history, I see he is taken severely to task for the assertion—and most unjustly so I think.

Without further hap or adventure we reached Schudic Lake. From the entrance of the river into it to the Indian encampment was only a couple of miles, so a strong and deep stroke with our paddles, in half an hour revealed the wigwams, which stood upon some high ground divested of trees, at the termina-



tion of a narrow bay. But for thin lines of circling smoke I should have thought the place deserted, for neither canoe upon the beach, or other insignia, showed signs of human occupation.

My companion proposed a shot to warn them of our coming. Acquiescing in his suggestion, I raised the muzzle of my gun to the heavens and pulled the trigger, and scarcely had the report died away in the distance before a dozen persons of every age and sex, with twice the number of dogs, appeared almost as rapidly as Roderick Dhu's soldiers from their unpretending dwellings, and laughing, hooting, and scrambling, rushed to the landing-place to greet the strangers, who by this time had got into sufficiently shallow water to render it necessary to disembark from the canoe, that her frail bottom might not suffer from coming in contact with the pebbly beach. Welcome, most welcome were we made by these primitive people ; but I must record to their shame, that the Indian dogs were far from favourably impressed with the appearance of my quadrupeds, and that moreover they did not hesitate to show it. But the hands of their masters were no way backward in repressing such inhospitable conduct, sticks and stones were abundant and close ; in a moment females and males had each seized a weapon, and the numerous howls and limping

dogs disappearing over the brow, told that skill with such missiles was part of the education of the Indian. A short examination of the goodly assembly disclosed that the majority were women and children, the young and mature men being away hunting; but this circumstance did not appear in the least to prevent our becoming the recipients of their hospitality.

Foremost among those who presented themselves to shake hands with me, were Saucy and Fatty-plumpy. Never previously had I seen either look so well; their dark skins glistened with the bloom of health, and their mischievous eyes twinkled with merriment as if they recalled the memory of something unusually droll. Perhaps my countenance indicated the same, for every time our eyes met there was a speaking glance, a downward look, and a subdued titter. However, the two sisters did not consider that they were alone intended for ornament, for my baggage was divided between them, and each with a fair man's load on her back, walked by my side towards the wigwams with as much ease and grace as a Regent-street beauty would with nought but her parasol to encumber her.

A point of etiquette now occurred which required finesse so as to hurt no one's feelings, viz., whose

domicile should I occupy. As a white hunter, the chief's by right, in which case I should be eternally under the gaze of these mischievous girls, and who possibly might revert to their matrimonial stratagems, so I proposed, as neither the chief nor his sons were at home, to quarter myself on a querulous, blear-eyed sexigenarian, with a limp in one leg, and a most diabolical cast of countenance. But this would not be listened to; in fact, I doubt much if the old man had the power to receive me after what was said, and I was pushed and hauled into the wigwam of the parents of the two dark-skinned beauties; the wife, and I suppose the mother of Fatty-plumpy, stating in high falsetto all the time, "That as all their mans had gone hunt, plenty room for me." I should not like to take away the good lady's character, and then I might be mistaken, for her English was far from perfect, and my knowledge of her tongue limited, but as they had no male guardian at home, inclination as well as right made her appropriate the first man that Providence threw in her way.

However, the air was too warm and the flies too numerous to enjoy any comfort within their birch-bark residence, so I seized the first available opportunity to escape into the fresh air, and when I imagined myself free from observation, picked up

my gun, and whistling for Poteen and Skye, stole off into the woods. Whether it be that this situation from proximity to the lake is less sheltered than the vicinity of my own shanty, the cover was not nearly so dense, and the deciduous trees appear less numerous. Pushing directly from the water, I kept ascending till I gained an elevation over the lake of six or seven hundred feet. This plateau was entirely free from large timber, although clothed with a close growth of witch-elm, sumach, and several varieties of creepers.

From the altitude of the position a pleasant breeze was perceptible, and the nuisances of the lowlands, the flies and mosquitoes, were absent. The view from here was magnificent. At my feet reposed the lake calm as glass, while the shadows on its bosom reflected the surrounding high ground and trees with as much distinctness as if they were reality. Numerous islands of irregular shapes and various sizes, all covered with heavy coniferous timber, added much to the picturesqueness of the scene, while the hazy green distance of outline, occasionally broken by a monarch of the forest more stalwart than his fellows, formed a most fitting and charming picture. To the left could trace for many a mile the tortuous course of the river which we had descended in the morning,

green as an emerald where the pools occurred, but white as snow along the surface of the turbulent rapids.

No need here for distance to lend enchantment to the scene. All was enchantment, fairyland; but only fancy the contrast between it at this season and in the depths of winter; could anything be imagined greater?—I very much doubt it. Skirting this ridge the dogs flushed a brace of Canadian or spruce partridges, which with their usual indifference to the presence of man, lit on the branch of a patriarchal birch-tree within twenty yards of my position.

Inquisitiveness, as with women, seems to be their besetting weakness, and as often brings the former to a premature death, as the latter into trouble. The wing of a wonderfully killing trout fly is made from this bird's rich dark chestnut feathers, so I felt few qualms of conscience in killing both.

They were in most perfect feather, and would have done grace to an ornithologist's case of stuffed birds. In appearance they very much resemble the red grouse of our Scotch hills, so much so in fact, that all but an expert would confuse the two together, for even the scarlet iris around the eye is not wanting.

The extreme tameness of the spruce partridge, more properly spruce grouse, is easily accounted for.

Inhabiting as they do these immense northern forests, they seldom or never see members of the human family, and thus are ignorant of his bloodthirsty instincts. The fox, the mink, and the eagle-owl, they are familiar with, and possess as much subtlety in avoiding their proximity as many birds that are supposed to be far more wary.

I have often advocated their introduction into the North of England and South of Scotland, but I fear my endeavours have not been crowned with success, for I have never learned of a trial being made, still I stick to my idea, and believe the man of means would be well rewarded, even supposing he spent hundreds of pounds to be successful in the project.

Winding down the side of the slope sheltered from the northern breezes, I found wherever the ground was sufficiently open, the greatest abundance of wild strawberries, not large like those that are highly cultivated, or even of medium size, as such that have gone wild in an old bed from neglect, but the tiny little mountain berry so delicious in flavour. Their profusion was something remarkable, for in the space of a couple of yards, diminutive as they were, sufficient might have been collected to have satisfied the appetite of a growing schoolboy, and that is not saying



a little. In the vicinity of Pembina I had previously seen strawberries growing in great luxuriance, but not numerically to compare with the profusion of those now around me. Of course, such an opportunity was not to be let pass, so I lay down at length and fed till satiated.

I was not alone in my feast, for numerous peabiddy-birds (white-throated sparrow) and hermit thrushes seemed to be as partial to this delicately flavoured fruit as myself, and so careless did they appear to be of my presence that they darted down among the green vine-like leaves, or hovered over an intended alighting place, frequently within a few paces of my couch. This was rather surprising, for the hermit thrush is of such a solitary nature, than even in glades and forests where he is known to be abundant it is no easy matter to get sight of this exquisite songster—exquisite I say, for there are few birds that possess such a charming flute-like note, which it often prolongs in the warm nights of early summer up to even the wee small hours.

A month ago, those trees which cast their leaves in fall were as bare as telegraph poles, now they are covered with as dense a foliage as the most luxuriant of exotics. The rapidity with which vegetable life advances after the snows have become melted, and the



chill frosts of night are followed by days of heat, has often been commented upon, but those who have not seen it would never realise it from description. The increase is so rapid, that the difference that occurs in twenty-four hours is perfectly observable. In the short space of a single night, and in little more than a week, some species, particularly the sugar maple, from being absolutely naked will be clothed in a dense and lovely foliage. In my stroll I came across one of my special favourites, for I know few trees more picturesque, viz., a black-birch almost eighty feet in height, and clothed about its stem with the most ragged coating of slate-coloured moss and dishevelled bark, so as to impart the idea to the observer that its age must almost be coeval with that of the world. I never look at one of these hoary giants, but the figure of old Father Winter, or Santa Claus, as represented for the special edification of Christmas-keeping holiday-makers, is vividly recalled to my mind. So inflammable is this extraneous substance attached to it on all sides, that a spark will almost ignite it, when it will burn with a fierceness and rapidity truly alarming, forming a pillar of fire from ground to summit of impetuous, leaping flames, devouring with hungry fury all that will support their existence.

This tree, however, must not be confounded with the white-birch, no less graceful in its form and drooping tendrils, or with the paper-birch, so much sought after by the Indian, for from it not only are their canoes made, but table utensils and ornaments.

On returning towards the wigwams of my hosts, I saw two canoes racing up the bay, doubtless the hunters returning, who having noticed an unknown craft on the beach, are hurrying on, anxious to find what stranger the Manitoo has brought to their camp.

The aged Indian is not a man to say much, still I doubt if his feelings of kindness and hospitality are less strong than those possessed by the empty-headed, but fulsome votary of fashion. I know if I had to choose whose word I should place the greatest faith in, my choice would not be flattering to those of my own colour.

In civilised life I would have been expected to leave the wigwam and meet my future hosts on their way from the beach. In associating with Indians, anything like an attempt to curry favour with them is to be deprecated. Thus I sat down in the chief's lodge, lit my pipe, and relapsed in a moody and thoughtful silence. Presently the owner entered, fixing his keen eyes upon me, grunted what was intended for a

welcome, squatted upon his hams, and busied himself filling his pipe. Then ensued a long silence.

"The white man is sick?" inquired my host.

"No, but he is sad," I responded, continuing, "The brother of my tribe, that came to your woods with me, is lost or dead; have your young men killed him?"

Laying down his pipe, leaning towards me and steadfastly gazing in my face, with more of earnestness and less of vehemence in his manner, he said: "The children of my tribe kill now only cariboo and moose. Your brother is alive, but in a new hunting-ground away six days' journey, where the pale-face squaw dwells. I know no more."

I did not suppose that Antoine had been killed, but I thought it was necessary for our mutual safety to show an anxiety for the welfare of my companion, for they were doubtless aware that I had not communicated with or heard from him since his departure now nearly six weeks ago.

After a long pause in which I said nothing, and in which the eyes of the Red-man were firmly fixed on me, he said, "You are welcome."

Then I handed him my pipe, which he took, returning the compliment by giving me his. Each then smoked, the silence only being broken by the

females entering with their lord's gun and traps, over the stowing away of which they spend an unnecessary length of time, doubtless their curiosity fabricating this flimsy means of excuse for prolonging their stay with hopes of gratifying their curiosity on the subject of our conversation. Thus the *entente cordiale* was thoroughly established, and although little was spoken the greatest good feeling prevailed.

## CHAPTER XV.

THIS old chief was as fine a specimen of the Indian as I ever met; although not over ordinary height, he was graceful, and remarkably symmetrically formed. In age, I should imagine, close on sixty, still upright in carriage as a wand. He also possessed a most searching eye, and one that never for an instant quailed under the look of the person he conversed with. This is unusual with the Red-man; seldom can he look you straight in the face, and too frequently his manner before white men implies inferiority.

From my host I learned that his had been once a powerful tribe, but from small-pox (the scourge of all the aboriginal population) getting introduced among them, their numbers had become decimated, till only thirty-four members remained. "It was the fire-water brought among us by the voyageur that

offended the great Manitoo," he exclaimed. This doubtless had been told him by the Roman Catholic or Wesleyan missionaries, who have done zealous and earnest work in neighbouring localities. And the means being justified by the result, no one will blame these earnest good men for making use of such a subterfuge.

To the Indian, whisky implies ruin, starvation, and death, therefore any means, I say, are justifiable to prevent their using it. Is not this craving for ardent spirits among a race who until within the last century knew of no liquid stronger than water, extraordinary; every feeling seems to give way under its influence, and the most fearful example of its baneful results has no more power to detain them from indulging in it to excess, than if they were entirely destitute of the power of restraint.

The principal purport of my visit was soon explained, viz., obtaining one of the young men to accompany me on my proposed tramp to the barren grounds. The old chief in a regretful tone of voice said, that but for his age he would go with me himself, but "He now too old, too muchee old," and then silently sat and thought.

In the mean time supper was brought in by his squaw and the younger women, who remained to

participate in the feast—a stewed porcupine, and no mean delicacy I can vouch for, when properly cooked. At length *quantum sufficit*, and the host and I ceased together, and both drew a sigh of relief, not a bad indication that we had had enough. After a yawn and a stretch, and a long but finally successful effort to light his pipe, the chief commenced :

“ I have been thinking, as I cannot go, and you want Indians to accompany you ”—here the squaw, her step-daughter, and daughter ceased eating, and fixed their eyes intently upon the head of the family —“ that you had better take my brother’s son,” continued the chief ;” but he got no further, for here Saucy exclaimed, “ I go !” Fatty-plumpy called out, “ Me go !” and the old harridan, the female head of the house, in whom up to the present moment I had seen some points worthy of admiration, in shrill, high falsetto voice, backed up the proposition of both the girls.

I am certain if any one could have seen me under the ordeal, they would have said that I looked sternly grand upon this occasion. If I did not, I felt so ; but my stateliness availed nothing in the womens eyes, for there ensued from their tongues a wrangle of high words, entirely conducted in Indian ; but ignorant as I was of that language, I could frequently detect the mention of my name.



Stately as the monarch on his throne I sat, patiently waiting for the chief to reprove such unseemly conduct; but relief did not come—taciturn he continued to remain. What conclusion but one could I under such circumstances come to, that the poor old fellow was hen-pecked; hen-pecked as severely as any city man by aristocratic wife, as any good-looking idle ne'er do anything for himself by the partner of his joys and sorrows, who has several thousands laid out at interest, and considerable expectation looming in futurity. To escape civilisation, match-making mothers, would-be married daughters, I had betaken myself to a life of solitude, and after all to find that the female bosom, though clothed in deer-skin, was actuated by the same impulses as those habited in silks and laces—was it not disappointing—fearfully disappointing?

From the head of the family I could not get another word that night, no, not a syllable; but what the chief wanted in powers of speech, was amply made up by his better-half—his superior half, I should have said. Not the least amusing, well, annoying portion of the matter was, that I, the by far most interested person, was not permitted an opportunity to get in a word, either in the way of objection or dissent, edge-wise or otherwise; evidently it was considered that I had been put up at auction, bid for, knocked down,

and sold. One consolation I nevertheless noted, there was a split in the camp, and disunion often leads to destruction, thought I, chuckling, mind you internally, for both the young ladies had the argument to themselves, which was conducted in the angriest tones, when the old squaw spoke, and after much earnestness, and a considerable amount of patience, pacified the belligerents.

All this time the old chief was dumb; the only evidence that he evinced of life was the puff, puff, puff of his fondly-loved pipe. And your humble servant followed suit, rivalling in his efforts the grandeur of the old Sachem. However, the aged Indian was not long left to himself, his wife, acting as spokesman for the daughters, harangued him, and he answered in the affirmative by a grunt. Then the old lady addressed her broken English to me. Courtesy forbade me not to listen; the purport of what she said was that her two daughters desired to appropriate me; that Saucy was without a rival in paddling a canoe or making camp; and Fatty-plumpy for packing home game, or making moccasins, was beyond all compeers, and that they both wished to become my squaws. At this speech, which I have much abbreviated, the old chief grunted a "humph" of assent, and the young women in question looked

unutterable things at me, and defiantly at each other.

At length I felt ready for sleep, so I rolled myself in my blanket and laid down ; however, the drowsy god forsook me after being in the land of dreams for an hour or two. The heat felt oppressive, and the mosquitoes hovered over me in clouds, when I awoke ; but I was not half refreshed, so craved for more repose. Giving a stretch, I rolled over on the other side, but came in contact with a reclining figure. Well, why not sleep with my face turned one way as well as another, thought I, so I tried to revert to my original position, but my outstretched arms came in contact with another human form. By degrees I was fully awake. I remembered the country I was in, and how in it customs prevailed widely different from those in the land of my birth ; and that the danger in these unknown forests, and among its inhabitants, were universally greater than could be encountered at home. So these noble confiding people, the chief and the sharer of his state, knowing this, had taken up their sleeping place on either side of me, the better to preserve your humble servant from all dangers while a guest in their humble dwelling.

Very considerate, doubtless, I thought this, far more than your most devoted host would do for you

in England. (Oh how selfish society over there has become of late years; a man's value now-a-days is reckoned by the length of his purse. Any snob can marry a pretty woman if the balance at his banker's will furnish her with an indefinite amount of gewgaws, &c., floated through my brain in the course of the subsequent half-hour.) However, it was time again to go to sleep, and doubtless I would have done so, but for those bloodthirsty pests, the mosquitoes, who kept singing and biting, biting and singing till I could stand it no longer.

For a moment, nervously, I fumbled in my pockets for my match-box; everything in rotation came to hand but what I wanted; at length I clasped the object of my search, and I looked forward with transport to blowing such a cloud as would make every one of these winged pests as sick as a bride of her marriage tour, such a one as prefers to be able to say that she spent her honeymoon abroad, so gets a taste of a thorough south-western gale crossing the Channel. By the sense of touch I loaded my pipe, then sat up and sharply drew the match over the rough edge of the box, there was a splutter, a blaze, and afterwards a doubtful moment whether the lucifer would burn up or not; the hesitation decided the matter in my favour, and as I sucked into the bowl of my pipe the ruddy blaze I cast my eyes thoughtfully upon the recumbent

figures on either side, for I had no desire to wake elderly people, knowing how important it is that they should have an uninterrupted night's rest. But is it possible, that on my left is no wrinkled face, that on the right no shrivelled-up arm.

In my astonishment I nearly swallowed pipe, stem and all; and might have shoved the match down my throat, for I extinguished it, and throwing myself back with a groan, stoically permitted the mosquitoes to drink, if they thought proper, my heart's blood. But all my fortitude could not school me long to treat these winged pests with indifference, so in anguish of spirit I groaned, and restlessly and unwillingly kept changing my position.

At length a gentle voice asked me if I was ill. I answered not, when another repeated the same query. In an instant I pulled my blanket over my head and commenced to snore vociferously, as if I had never known any other state than somnolence. The result of this last stratagem was different from what I anticipated, for doubtless impressed with the belief that I wished to impart to them, simultaneously each of my flankers came closer to me; the move might have been prompted by the philanthropic desire to leave less room for the mosquitoes to practice their leech-like proclivities upon me. I, however, in time slept, not soundly; for I dreamed a dream, which,

when I thought over in the morning, reminded me of what I had read of the temptations good St. Anthony had been submitted to.

To say that I rose up refreshed would be stating an untruth; my mind was *distract*, my body demoralised, but the old cure served me good purpose. Don't imagine I am going to sound the praises of brandy and soda-water, for I don't believe in them, and if I did, they were not obtainable here; but a plunge into the clear pellucid lake.

During a stroll, afterwards, I found I had an appetite, so returned to the wigwam, having tried very hard, and almost satisfactorily, to conclude that the experiences of last night never occurred, but were the result of a highly-wrought imagination caused by a disordered stomach. My reception on joining the breakfast was cordial in the extreme; nothing transpired to mar the harmony of the entertainment, so the clouds of future disagreeables which I had fabricated, floated away like mist before the sun.

With the old chief as companion, after having fed till nature demanded no more, we sauntered out to smoke our morning pipe. My dogs were as usual at my heels, for now that I was among strangers, they never permitted me to be out of their sight for a moment. Indians are seldom, almost never loquacious,



and this interview did not belie their character. Possibly we had been together a quarter of an hour, perhaps more, when a remarkably well-bred looking fox-hound came towards us. From the way he carried his head, I knew that he either was deaf, or suffered severely from canker in one of his ears. At this apparition I was surprised, immensely surprised, although I doubt if I could have been knocked down with a feather. Was such to be wondered at, for here was an animal that would have done credit, aye, possibly led the van in the best-bred pack in England? In height the hound was about twenty-six inches at the shoulder, and his deep chest and strong couplings spoke of unusual strength and power. When approaching us, my dogs met him half-way, and if I dare judge from his manner, he recalled from their appearance memories of a long past life. No growl was on his lip, or churlishness denoted by his open honest face as the strangers advanced and welcomed him. Again and again, as if uncertain that this interview were possible, he inspected Skye and Poteen, and as often would stretch himself, scratching up the grass with his hind legs, and place his deep-flewed muzzle in the air and cause the woods to echo with his deep mellow voice.



At length the old hound came towards me. I held down my hand to caress him, but he withdrew his head and sniffed around it for some minutes ; then he raised himself on his hind limbs, placed his paws upon my shoulder, and looking heavenward, gave expression to his feelings by many a deep and long-drawn note of pleasure.

“That dog know you?” said the old chief.

“No, but he knows my race,” responded I ; “but where does he come from?” I inquired.

And the old Indian told me ; it was a long story, but I will do my best to narrate it correctly.

“Years ago there came here a white man. He was a great chief in his own country the voyageurs told me. With him were two dogs, that is one ; for two years he lived among us, and each day he spent in fishing and hunting ; day after day he went to the woods or water, and never returned without game. At length a bear killed one of his dogs and he was sad. Months afterwards passed on till summer came, when he bid us good-bye, and started across the lake, for he said he was going to the east, to the land of his fathers. In summer, when the waters are low, the most skilful Indian can with difficulty travel that route ; for the sharp jagged rocks are so close and near the surface that none but those who know the rapids

intimately can pass through them in safety. I feared for this white man; I even proposed to go with him myself, or send one of the young men of the tribe, but his answer ever was, 'I go alone.' The day he departed his canoe was out of sight before noon, and with its disappearance we ceased to think of him, not to forget him. Four days after his master had left, this dog returned to our camp, not where it is now, but away across that bay, and the poor creature was half-starved from want of food, and almost devoured by the flies. A dog will not leave his master while he lives, therefore I saw evil in this, so that night determined to find out if I had just grounds for my forebodings. They were too true; we found the canoe with a hole in its side and bottom upwards against the rocks, near at hand the dead and disfigured body of our late visitor. On that point (pointing northward), under a hemlock, where the cariboo pass every spring and fall, he is buried."

A few days afterwards one of the tribe found his gun. "I will fetch it for you to look at;" and for a few moments I was left alone; no, not alone, for my four-footed companions were with me, and the old hound, who looked steadfastly in my face, and to every word of petting or commendation I uttered bow-wowed a deep and solemn response.

The chief was not long absent ; on his return he placed in my hand a modern double-gun, and although it showed evidence of wear and neglect, the excellence of its workmanship could not be disputed. I glanced along the rib that separated the barrels at the breech ; rust had as yet done little to obliterate the name of one of the most fashionable West-end makers of twenty-five years ago.

But who was this stranger ? would it ever be known ? Whether or not, of one thing I felt certain, that he was a man of good birth and fair means, or how would he have possessed a pair of hounds that the Beaufort pack might have been proud of, a gun from the hands of a maker that Royalty would have patronised ?

Looking across intently at that distant point I could distinguish a hemlock, faintly it is true, still my eye is too conversant with the foliage of trees to make a mistake ; and beneath its sombre plumage rests one for whom many a fair acre and an ancestral hall possibly was intended as an heritage. Does no mother pine for the wanderer's return ? or has watching and hope deferred laid her in an early grave ? I look down and the old hound's eye catches mine, and again he sounds a deep and sad note, truly a fitting requiem to my thoughts. Skye and Poteen, jealous

by nature to an extreme, took no dislike to their fellow-countryman, and the old creature would not leave me for a moment ; his attachment was painful, for his bleary eyes remained ever fixed on me, as if to lose me from his sight was to lose all that bound him to life, could instinct have told him to the land of his birth.

Later on in the day I found the chief's nephew ; he was an active, clean-built youth of three or four-and-twenty. To him I stated in as concise a manner as possible my future movements, and my desire for his companionship. Like all Indians, till there was a grand pow-wow over the subject, he would promise nothing, so another day was lost. On the morrow, however, I became impatient, and vowed I should go with Sugar as my sole companion, if he had not made up his mind by sunrise next morning. That night his services were tendered and accepted ; and I was more than satisfied, for I believed I had obtained a guide in whom I could repose every confidence, and who would stand to me through every danger as long as he possessed life.

The ways of the Chinese are pronounced to be strange by a popular modern writer ; the same conclusion I have long come to about the Indians, so commenced to believe that the lively interest taken

in me by the daughters of the heads of the establishment was only an indication of the value the chief placed upon the friendship of the white stranger, and their choice of resting-place immediately in my vicinity on the last night, instead of reposing as far as possible from who might have been the gayest of Lotharios, caused me scarcely more than a momentary thought. Moreover, it takes two to make love, and as I had not evinced the slightest disposition for even flirtation, I felt that really there were no grounds for alarm. However, I had reckoned wrongly, as the sequel will show.

About sunrise I was on the beach ready for departure. The baggage, much augmented in quantity, lay ready for shipment, but my canoe had disappeared. Wondering what could have become of it, I was awoke from my reverie by a much larger craft being carried out of the brush and launched, and before I could interfere, the luggage was quickly placed on board, each of the young squaws, paddle in hand, taking a position in it. In a moment I saw a deep trap had been laid for me, and that it would require some finesse and much decision of character not to fall into it.

Drawing myself up I inquired what had become of my canoe. A Babel of tongues answered that it

was too small. To this statement I politely but firmly differed; but the clamour of half a dozen voices drowned my words. Order and silence being restored, I counted on my fingers to the old chief the number of my party, and appealed to his judgment for support. Doubtless he would have done so, but the high falsetto voice of his wife drowned the old man's words ere they got utterance; "And him, and him," the harridan exclaimed over and over again, pointing to the two girls, who each time echoed her words with, "And me, and me," pointing at the same time with the forefinger of their right hand towards their charming selves.

This could not be. I had no food, no accommodation for such an increase to my party, and therefore I must decline the pleasure of their company. But the old squaw, old woman like, again put in her oar, and addressing herself to me, said, "But him your squaw, and him your squaw," pointing out the young ladies in succession, and continued this chant for several minutes, her gestures and voice becoming momentarily louder.

At length I could stand it no longer, so insisted that my canoe should be produced. After this there was a pause, and I really commenced to fear that I was trapped, when the old chief recovered his self-



possession, ultimately ordering two of the outside spectators, who I must say all along appeared immensely tickled at the whole proceeding, to fetch my canoe from the brush where it had doubtless been secreted by orders of my would-be mother-in-law, and my would-be wives. To pick out from among the baggage in the larger craft what belonged to me was only the work of a few moments; in a second or two afterwards we were all afloat and some yards intervening between the shore, when a thought struck me that it would be better to endeavour to say a few parting words that would pacify my late hospitable friends. So I addressed them and stated that my refusal of the honour that had been offered me, was not from a depreciation of the beauty and attractiveness of the good old chief's daughters, very far from it, for Saucy rivalled the fawn in grace and Fatty-plumpy the swan in rounded contour of form, that how happy could any man be with either, and supremely blessed with both, but to accept so much happiness required consideration, which I would give it during my absence. This excuse evidently was not considered in a favourable light, for both mother and daughters turned upon the old chief, whose raised voice now indicated that he had already borne as much as human nature could or would submit to. As the light



buoyant craft swiftly glided from the shore, I heard a long deep howl; it was the poor old hound whom the Indians were dragging from the water, which he had entered obviously with the intention of swimming after me.

Once clear of the headlands, as the breeze was fair, a blanket was set to officiate as sail, and we bowled along right merrily over the sparkling waters while I paid out a heavily shotted spoon-bait with the hope of catching some of the great lake trout which abound in all these inland waters. After being over an hour unsuccessful as we skirted the sombre sides of a heavily timbered island, I had a run and soon after landed a fish of near twenty pounds weight.

From its size I might have expected a fierce and protracted struggle, but these lake dwellers possess none of the game qualities of the inhabitants of the rivers and brooks; they are very dark in colour with large heads, and although no doubt for an instant can arise that they do not belong to the *Salmonidæ* family, still they are not possessed of the graceful lines and contour of the other representatives of the race.

While near land, although the water had every appearance of great depth, my spoon-bait was scarcely

overboard a few minutes before I hooked a fish, and as none got away and the hook was deeply fastened in the gullet of each capture, I am inclined to believe that they are most greedy feeders.

In my younger days I lived for some time on the banks of Lough Neagh, in the North of Ireland; frequently I have seen the fishermen there take in their draught-nets a large lake trout which they called doli-chan and buddoch; the resemblance between these fish and those of this distant lake in north-west territory was very striking. Those in Ireland go up the rivers in autumn to spawn, whether their American congeners have the same habit I was unable to learn.

Carrying sail upon a canoe is so dangerous, except when its management be entirely trusted to Indians, that I would advise no white man to attempt it, unless he be brought up in the backwoods, and accustomed to the management of these crafts from his infancy, for the very slightest mistake will turn them over. At first when the blanket was set I acknowledge to having felt nervous, but soon that feeling was dispelled, for any one at a glance could see that my new attendant was most skilful in handling his tottleish bark.

Skirting for miles a low weedy shore, just such a

place as the angler at home would expect to find pike, we doubled a rocky headland, and disembarked at the mouth of a clear pebbly-bottomed stream which entered the lake in a glorious rapid. Time was precious, as we were anxious to tramp ten miles before dark, or nothing would have pleased me better than to have tried how the thousands of trout rising on every side would take the artificial fly.

Secreting our canoe in a dark thicket of dwarf cedar, shouldering our respective packs and starting in Indian file over an undefined trail, took few more minutes than required to narrate it, and before we had gone over a quarter of a mile, we had entered as dark and gloomy a piece of woodland I ever remember to have traversed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

MY new attendant I called Cariboo (not because that was his name, but had some resemblance to it), for the Indian languages have a peculiar guttural intonation in nearly every syllable, that even if you remember a word it is next to impossible to pronounce it correctly.

Our line of march was in the following order. Cariboo in front, succeeded by Sugar, myself bringing up the rear. The heaviest load was carried by the leader. About fifty pounds it must have weighed, not including my spare gun and some loose ammunition. My own pack was about thirty-five pounds, while Sugar's was somewhat less.

From the spongy nature of the soil our progress at first was very slow, not even a mile an hour, but as we commenced to ascend to more elevated ground,

the trees and brush becoming less dense and the footing better, the pace considerably increased.

I can carry a gun from night till morning and feel very trifling fatigue result; but the moment I mount a pack, all energy and strength seem to desert me. I believe most thoroughly that Cariboo would have no more difficulty in carrying a hundred-weight than I would my present load. The Indians are really extraordinary fellows at such a task, and the rapidity that they get over the ground when performing it, always providing the walking is good, cannot fail to evoke the admiration of all observers.

From cedar and hemlock swamp we got into forests of deciduous timber, here and there mixed with pine; hare-runs were numerous in every direction, and the dogs kept incessantly flushing spruce-grouse. If it had not been for the flies, which were very troublesome, and the severe tax upon our strength imposed by our loads, this walk would have been most enjoyable after we left the lowlands; but long before I reached our halting-place I felt thoroughly knocked up, pride, and the injury that might ensue from setting so bad an example, alone preventing me from giving in.

At length—and I don't think I ever uttered "thank God" with more fervency for anything—we came to a small opening, with numerous lodge-poles stand-

ing in it. Here Cariboo stopped, and without the slightest evidence of impatience or desire for release, quietly deposited his load. I fear I did not follow the example set me with the same patience and method; but, oh! thanks for the relief I got when released from its pressure.

A prettier spot for a hunter's camp would be difficult to find. From a brook about twenty yards wide, bounding over a rock and gravel bottom, rose an abrupt slope, the summit of which was flat and covered with the closest carpeting of moss and grass. In front, and on either flank, stretched a fine forest of deciduous and coniferous timber now in all the glory of summer foliage.

My companions, after an absence of a few minutes, returned with loads of birch-bark, so blackened with smoke that they had evidently done duty frequently before, and with them soon constructed a capital wigwam. The frying-pan was shortly after brought into play, so that ere darkness set in, there was every prospect of passing a most comfortable night.

The morning broke bright and clear, not a cloud upon the sky, not a fleece of mist upon the earth, and far-off ridges, with their fringe of glorious pines, stood forth in clearness of outline, so that the stranger only accustomed to other climes, would have

imagined them half the distance from us that they were. And the perfect silence that reigned around was not even broken by the sough of the wind.

“ Beautiful ! charming ! lovely ! ” I exclaimed. Confound those flies though ; in my absence of mind the pests had taken advantage of me, and ruthlessly awoke me from my reverie.

The heavy tramp through the swamp, and the climb up the steep ascent yesterday, had made me more than desirous for a dip in the murmuring brook at our feet ; but how to accomplish it I knew not, for to defend my face and hands, let alone my whole body, from mosquitoes and black-flies, was a task I was certain most imperfectly to perform ; but I felt dirty, clammy, and craved for the invigorating pleasure of lolling at length in one of the shallow rapids. The more I considered the risk, the less could I restrain my hankering, so I resolved to chance it. To undress and tumble into the water was not difficult, *sed revocare gradus*, that was the hitch, for wet or only partially dry drawers, or even trousers, are apt to have a will of their own and resist being rapidly jumped into. Therefore I summoned Sugar and directed him to cut a cedar branch with which to thrash the scoundrels off while I got into the first coating of my apparel.



“Are you ready, boy?” I exclaimed, when I saw him standing on the bank with the bough in his hand.

“Yes, Capen,” he exclaimed, and I made one rush for him.

Vigorously he applied the whisk; with celerity I struggled to get into my unmentionables, and as ever found the old adage verified, “the greater haste, the worse speed,” when the lad ceased suddenly in his efforts, for the little vixen Skye, supposing no doubt he was beating me, seized him by the hand. In an instant I turned round; the dog was about to renew the contest with total disregard for my voice, so I made a rush at him, and ludicrous to listen to, very painful to go through, I got a fearful cropper, for know, oh reader, that I had only succeeded in getting one leg home in my lower garment. To pick myself up, rush to my clothes and get into them, was only the work of a few minutes; but I deserved to be pitied, a hundred black-flies, and as many more mosquitoes, were already devouring me with all the assiduity of creatures who never before had known what it was to have a good square meal.

Fortunately, the lad was not much injured by the dog’s teeth; still prevention is better than cure, so I made him suck the wound till I could obtain my stick of caustic (a thing that no one should knock

about the bush without), when I cauterised the wound, and further explained so satisfactorily the cause of the dog's assault, that both the biter and the bitten were in ten minutes as good friends as ever.

Our tramp next day was very pleasant, rolling high grounds covered with birch being the preponderating feature. By noon we had made such good progress that we considered we had earned a halt of a couple of hours. While taking a stroll around to look for spruce-grouse, I came across a noble specimen of the great horned-owl. This bird must not be confused with the eagle, Canadian, or horned-owl, for it is a much larger, more powerful, and a far handsomer plumaged bird; in fact it is to American *Strigidæ* what the eagle is to *Falconidæ*. It also does not appear to suffer from the effects of daylight, for when flushed it took wing with as much confidence as any diurnal bird, alighting afterwards upon a distant tree without the slightest awkwardness. To find them among hardwood timber during the day, I believe to be rare; for heretofore I have only seen them in the densest cover of spruce and hemlock; but on mentioning the subject to Cariboo, he informed me that in these sequestered districts the birch openings appeared to be their favourite resort.

Before starting Sugar joined us with what the

Americans would call "a fine mess of trout." He had captured them all with a piece of red cloth tied over the shank of his hook, his rod and tackle being a sapling and a piece of cord. I do not think I ever saw fish with more resplendent colours, their backs being of the deepest marbled green, flanks like burnished copper, gradually running into straw-colour along the stomach, while their sides were covered with the most brilliant of vermilion and ochre spots.

By a couple of hours before sunset I should deem that we had made near upon twenty miles, so a halt was called in order that due time could be allowed for getting the camp in order before night set in. During the latter portion of the day cariboo tracks existed in every direction, but not one was to be seen. My elder associate noticed me observing them, and said :

"By-and-bye, two three day, you find plenty."

Our encampment this evening was no less to be admired than that of last night, for behind us rose some rather elevated and precipitous ridges clothed to their summit with magnificent pines, while beneath lay a lake, not over a mile in length, with a solitary wooded island in its centre. In Scotland it would have been called a tarn; with this word I somehow

associate supernatural beings, and few places I have ever seen were more likely to conjure up ideas in the mind of the believer in the mystic world than this lonely sheet of water.

Little of the sun's rays ever glinted off its bosom, for the land rose high around its placid surface, and the giant evergreens towered their heads towards heaven from the most elevated crests. An hour after the sun had disappeared a thread-sized crescent moon showed itself in the clear firmament above the feathery tree tops, and as the mosquitoes were less abundant, probably from the elevation of our position, I took my evening pipe out-doors. Oh, what a wonderful stillness reigned around; even the toad and green-headed frog had grown ashamed of disturbing the solitude, and the Canadian owl had desisted from uttering its maniac laugh.

Home and friends, companions in arms, some of whom had long gone to their resting-place, arose in vision before me. Crimean life, Indian plains, and Chinese joss-houses, passed before the retina of my brain, as if all composed one gigantic panorama. Then London with its innumerable gaslights, its busy thoroughfares, and brilliantly lit places of amusement, occupied my thoughts. My pipe had long gone out; feeling chilly from the night air, I

was about to make a move for my rug and camp-fire, when a yell as sudden as it was diabolical, rose, was re-echoed, and died away. My blood for a moment ran chill; but before I had further time for action, the same notes arose from another point; and my dogs, who were crouching at my feet, rose as if by mutual arrangement, so simultaneous was their action, and elevating their heads, howled most dismally. Well I knew what produced such doleful notes, still never do I hear them without a shudder. The strong-minded reader will say how childish; if he has experienced this wild yell in a suitable situation, I would submit to his opinion without cavil; but as I deem such to be improbable, I confess my weakness, for after all it was only the voice of the lucifee or bay lynx.

For three days we passed onwards, our path where possible being by compass due north, and one day was but a *resumé* of the other; our tramp from breaking up camp in the morning to pitching at night, seldom exceeding twelve or thirteen miles.

As Cariboo asserted, we saw his namesakes on the third afternoon; there were more than a dozen together, all more or less immersed in water on the margin of a flat-shored lake.

I did not see them till pointed out, and as fresh

meat was desirable, after tying up the dogs with instruction to release them if I waved my gun over my head, I resolved to make a stalk.

At starting I thought my undertaking easy enough, but soon found I had calculated without my host; for I discovered, when within three hundred yards of the quarry, that if I persisted in my approach from where I was, that I must cross a bare piece of smooth stony ground, almost a hundred yards in diameter.

So I drew back and made a detour, bettering myself, if possible, as regards winds, and recommenced an advance. Still it was not all easy sailing, for I was obliged to crawl along a dry crack little larger than a furrow that was laced and interlaced with the most affectionate briars I ever remember to have come in contact with. Though not the "wait-a-bits" of South Africa, they certainly would do no discredit to that distant part of the world. However, patience and a determination not to hurry, enabled me to overcome their embraces without losing temper. Inequalities in the ground, if trifling, are not observable from a distance; thus quite ignorant of the fortune in store for me I found that I could approach within fifty yards of the cariboo without more inconvenience than bending my shoulders. At length I



reached the brow that intervened between me and the game; something, I could not imagine that it was my approach, had alarmed them, and they were hastily leaving the water.

The nearest animal to me was a fine well-fed doe. On her flank I took aim; with the report she staggered, spun round and fell; in a moment after recovered her feet, and with hollow back, raised head, and protruding tongue, endeavoured to follow her comrades, who, by this time, were scouring away in the distance. I raised my gun and waved it for Poteen to be released; the movement disclosed to the wounded deer my position, which caused her to renew her efforts to escape, and so successful were they that I deemed it better to give her another shot. The thud that reached my ears told that the bullet had not been fruitlessly expended; and from the aim I had taken I believed that the ball had lodged within a few inches of its predecessor, still no indication was evinced by the stricken creature of its having any effect. But Poteen passes me with a rush, nor stops to inquire what is expected of him, but with the sagacity of his colley blood he sees and comprehends the whole affair, and is in a few moments baying the unfortunate cariboo. Having loaded I was approaching to deliver the *coup-de-grace*, when Skye, going



at his most rapid pace, which, at the best of times, was of no great shakes, rushed by me, to assist his comrade. Bullied in front and rear, having to spring round first to face one aggressor then another, did its work, and the death-stricken creature fell to the earth exhausted.

The fresh meat was most acceptable, and a jolly feed of tit-bits ensued, the gormandising being kept up by the Indians far on into the wee small hours. The amount of animal food Indians can eat, and where they manage to stow it, is really surprising. Even that atom of a Red-man, Sugar, consumed more than half a dozen Yorkshire ploughman could eat for a wager. The result was as might be expected, our start on the morrow was not effected till late, and our progress during the remainder of the day was slow and laboured.

That evening our camp was neither picturesque nor comfortable, the only thing that could recommend the position being the vicinity of an excellent spring of water. The flies, however, were exceedingly troublesome, and the dogs unusually restless.

About an hour before dawn we had a perfect serenade of wolves, bass-voiced, powerful-lunged fellows, who from their propinquity appeared inclined to object to our invasion of their demesne.

"Plenty cariboo to-morrow," said Cariboo.

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because wolf plenty; no cariboo, no wolf," he answered.

Such was the case, for plenty of deer were seen, some still with their antlers in the moss, others with its dishevelled shreds hanging to them like pieces of scant black ribbon. Not requiring meat I did not attempt a stalk, but feel convinced I could have successfully done so if desirous. Several wolves were seen during the day, and at such distances to have probably afforded successful shots, but carrying a load on one's back sadly demoralises the shooter. So I let these bloodthirsty scoundrels go their way, trusting that we might meet on a future day when I had ceased to be a beast of burden.

So exposed was our camp that evening that not even the hum of a mosquito was heard, and the heat of the camp-fire was most acceptable. Consequently I enjoyed the best night's rest I had had for weeks. To all appearances we have reached the highest elevation southward of the great river, which, judging from what the Indians say, and the computed distance we have travelled, cannot be over sixty or seventy miles off. Nothing but dwarf timber and tangled brush cover these barriers; but attractive

as they are now, I can imagine them literally a howling wilderness in winter. The first ptarmigan we have come across I killed to-day; they were so numerous that I bagged seven in an hour, and although tempted to continue the slaughter by the most provokingly enticing shots, I desisted.

Cariboo were also still plentiful, several herds being seen in the course of our morning march. During our mid-day halt our guide killed a very large wolf—not an old effete scoundrel, but in the fullest vigour of life, and his hide, which of course so early in the season had not obtained the long growth of hair ultimately destined to cover it, was almost chestnut, and as soft as the pelt of a beaver. On inquiring the particulars of how he had got within sufficient distance to knock his quarry over, he informed me that he had found a dead fawn, only killed a few hours. Knowing that the slayers were not far distant he left the vicinity, but when out of sight made a stalk back to the place up wind, and thus got a shot.

Made an excellent march this afternoon, and long before sundown came to a long-used but most charming camping ground on the margin of quite a large river. White men have been here lately, for I found a broken clay pipe lying among the wood ashes, the

edges of the fracture which split the bowl being so fresh, that the accident to it appeared to have happened only a few hours. Showing it to Sugar, he immediately exclaimed, "Voyageur!" and so possibly it was, going to some distant trading ground of the Hudson Bay Company.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WE had scarcely got things in order for the night, and every prospect existed that we should enjoy uninterrupted rest, than there was a tremendous row among the dogs. Cariboo rushed off through the darkness in the direction of the contest, followed by Sugar. Phlegmatically I smoked on, for well I knew that, whatever they had got hold of, they were able to master, or ere this I should have heard them sing out, so contented myself and gulped down my impatience till my escort returned and made a report. Phew! my goodness! confound it! Such a smell once felt is never forgotten—no need the Indians telling me what they have got a hold of. I certainly said, “Confound the skunk,” or possibly used a stronger expression, for the whole atmosphere was redolent with the fetid stench; and when I commenced to think of Skye covered with the beastly

secretion, cuddling up to my side if the night got cold, oh, horrible! the thought almost made me ill in imagination.

Presently Indians and dogs returned. To say whether my two or four-footed friends smelt the strongest, would be a difficult matter. This I will say, that the dogs apparently had the most sensitive stomachs, for each got sick, and the Indians did not.

For many an hour after this episode, I lay and tossed about. Oh, how I wooed Somnus, but he would not be propitiated, although I smoked, smoked, smoked, till I felt convinced forty-eight hours' supply of tobacco had been consumed in a tenth of that time, and the roof of my mouth and upper portion of my tongue were parched as dry as a board, and imparted a flavour to my palate anything but aromatic. What was I to do? I had brought half a gallon of spirits with me, only to be used for medicinal purposes. I maturely considered the symptoms. I was an invalid, and no person in their proper senses could doubt it. So I quietly reached for my pack. Of course, I did not wish to be so selfish as to disturb others, and I took what a friend of mine would call a corker; I did not lay awake long after that dose of medicine. The next morning the camp remained so

redolent of skunk that I ate skunk, I drank skunk, and I breathed skunk. That fearful fetid, overpowering smell, and the repulsiveness of its odour, how can I describe it? This mishap was likely to interfere sadly with the pleasure of my future movements, for well I knew that it would take weeks to get rid of it, especially from the coats of the dogs, whom I was compelled for their safety ever to have in our encampment.

I cannot understand the perversity of members of the canine race. No amount of whipping will prevent them chasing and worrying the porcupine when opportunity offers; the same with the skunk, although they invariably become deadly sick for some hours afterwards. I acknowledge that the latter animal's cool effrontery is fearfully provoking, and I should imagine trying to the temper of a high couraged dog, for they have the most wonderful amount of assurance, walking into camp, or even wigwam, as if the place belonged to them, confident that they have but to open their battery to cause all to flee who are in the vicinity. As far as I am concerned they judge correctly, for I would sooner leave them my dinner, I believe even my pipe and tobacco-pouch, and that is saying a good deal, than for an instant dispute with them their right to possession. All the wild



animals treat them with the greatest courtesy, or else the creatures would be far more wary in their ways, for so indifferent to danger do they trot about the vicinity of their den, that if it were not so, it would require but a short time to extirpate the race.

Although I had determined to remain in this neighbourhood for some days, it did not prevent our commencing a flitting at an early hour to another site recommended by Cariboo, about half a mile down the river. The day, which had a close sultry feeling, promised rain, for the heavens were overcast with the darkest rolling clouds, while the wind soughed among the trees that skirted the river banks. It was a sad day, one of those that affect and depress the spirits, causing forebodings of evil constantly to arise. Our new halting-place was upon a peninsula, almost an island, projecting into a bend of the river, densely wooded on all sides, the centre for about the space of half an acre being perfectly bare, and so devoid of stumps that doubtless many years had passed since the axe had cleared it, for this clearing was evidently artificial. This conclusion I come to from pine being the preponderating growth of timber left, and pine stumps at the least calculation take a quarter of a century to decay. To this picturesque, retired opening in the

primeval forest, quite a history was attached, for Cariboo informed me that here for years, so many years back that the eldest of his tribe ceased to remember, came the missionaries to tell the Red-man what was good and bad medicine. I inquired from him what missionaries; evidently he misunderstood my question, but in response picked up a piece of birch-bark, and gazing fixedly upon it pretended to read, all the time declaiming with his hands. But this was not the information required; I wanted to explain to him the difference between the servant of the Church of Rome and Protestantism, and how to do it puzzled me completely. However, the Indian is wonderfully keen in his perception, and with a sudden bright radiation of countenance said, "Two missionary, one got squaw, one no have squaw, and do so," crossing himself in the most orthodox manner; "the last kind, him come here." This left no doubt on my mind that I stood upon one of those places that the Jesuits used to visit annually to preach the Gospel to the heathen at the time Canada was a possession of France. What an impressive sight it must have been, more than a hundred years ago, when this land supported a comparatively large Indian population, for it was before small-pox had made its decimating inroad among the Red-men, to have seen a venerable

father, so sincere in the faith he preached, as to travel thousands and thousands of miles to proclaim it to the heathen, holding forth to crowds of painted warlike savages, grouped in astonished, inquiring, picturesque crowds, under the dark shadows of the sombre coniferous trees. When our gallant troops under brave General Woolf were struggling hand to hand and foot to foot with their no less gallant foes on the plains of Abraham, when the noble Mountcalm and his chivalrous and successful antagonist were sighing out their life's blood within sight of the citadel of the New World, possibly as great a battle was being fought here, against the superstition and idolatry of the aborigines. The life of the missionary, whatever be his creed, is a hard one, and every honour is due to the sincere man who forsakes home, country, and relatives to perform the task to which he has devoted himself.

Before noon our camp was made, and the threatening state of the weather induced my attendants to pay more than ordinary attention to its construction. It was well they did so, for about two in the afternoon heavy drops of rain commenced to fall, rapidly increasing in number and violence. The breeze, which for some time had been hushed, in spasmodic gusts now swayed the tree-tops. Suddenly the heavens appeared to fall upon the earth, and down de-

scended the torrents and the wind tore over the landscape, as if from its previous imprisonment it had gained fresh fury. It was the white-squall of the ocean in its most violent form transferred to land. As I sought shelter from the raging elements, a flash of forked lightning lit up, then left in almost utter darkness the surrounding objects, followed by thunder so terrifically loud as almost to stun the listener. The sublime grandeur awed me; the Indians hid their heads and remained silent, while the dogs cowered away as if imbued with some all-powerful fear. At intervals of a few minutes again and again the thunder and lightning contended for mastery, each striving to outdo the other in violence, while the surface of the earth seethed with the impetuous downfall of rain as the surface of a boiling caldron.

Fortunately my waterproofs were at hand, for nothing in the shape of edifice but such composed of stone or bricks and mortar could keep out such a waterspout. But all things have an end, and storms, like tempers, last in proportion to their violence.

By six o'clock the clouds had broken and were drifting to leeward before a balmy breeze, and the whole earth emitted a fragrance, as if offering incense to the Creator for having prevented its destruction by the warring elements.

As soon as the rain had ceased I found my way to the edge of the river. By a deep rapid that rushed into a dark placid pool, I took a seat upon a ledge of rock. The discolouration of the water from the storm was trifling, and the fish, happy possibly in the anticipation of a glut of food being brought down from the upper tributaries of the stream, sprang from their liquid haunts in very wantonness of spirits.

The temptation I could stand no longer, so hastened for my rod. The time lost in putting it together I even regretted. At length it was ready for use, and the first cast hooked a fine fish. A second equally large was also landed; but the finest river trout that I have ever previously killed, weighing eleven or twelve pounds, was my third victim. When the sun dipped the horizon, I had such a load as I should be sorry to have been compelled to carry to a distant camp.

A strange peculiarity of the trout of these northern rivers is, that they cease to feed the moment twilight commences. Although possessing much experience of Scotch rivers I do not remember that such is the case; but I know that on the streams of Long Island and the South of Ireland, in the long calm nights of midsummer, I have taken fish in greater

quantities from sunset to break of day than in any other portion of the twenty-four hours. Many may disbelieve this statement; for the sake of proving the truth of what I state, let the fisherman in June find his way to the River Bride, in the county of Cork, let him commence work at Rathcormack about ten in the morning, and use throughout the day all the skill and knowledge he possesses, and I will pledge myself that he will kill a greater weight of fish in the first hour after sunset, than he does throughout the time the sun is above the horizon. Wanderer and sojourner in foreign lands as I have been, still can I not recall a more lovely river to fish than the rapid murmuring Bride of the Green Isle of the ocean.

The more severe the summer storm, the more invigorating the atmosphere appears after it has passed away; long and late I sat that night inhaling its fresh balminess. The woods were no longer silent, the depression that for a few nights previously overpowered all animal life was removed, and every rock, log, and tree seemed to find a voice.

Even the diminutive chain-mouse, that I had not heard since I sojourned on the banks of the distant Saskatchewan, claimed my attention, with its strange metallic note, so strange, indeed, that listening to it



induces wonder how aught in the shape of quadruped, and of so diminutive stature, can produce so unnatural a call.

Those that have been engaged in logging of a sharp frosty morning can remember the click that the ox-chain makes as the various links come together; the note of the chain-mouse is similar, but possessed of more reverberation although less body of sound. Oft on a stilly night when moose calling I have heard it; for many a day I wondered what it could be, till by chance I learned the origin of this quaintest of animal voices.

Whip-poor-will! who that has spent an evening in American forest-lands can forget this oft-repeated call. It truly has not the melody of the nightingale, still is soft and pleasant to the ear, although apt to be monotonous. To-night it sounded from the dark woods, evidence that this bird (one of the *Caprimulgidæ* family), although denied a residence by many authorities so far north, does in summer migrate to higher latitudes than supposed.

But to bed, to bed, sleepy head, I feel tired and drowsy, so retire.

Sugar next day was left in camp to take charge of my worldly wealth, while Cariboo with my second gun proposed hunting eastward, I selecting the reverse direction. In my tramp I saw several



reindeer, but as they appeared wild I did not attempt to stalk them. A wolf gave me a fair but long shot—which I missed—my want of skill not by any means improving my temper. Working my way off the barren grounds towards the river, I got into a dense swamp of hemlock and cedar, the mossy carpeting of the ground through which these evergreens sprung being cut up with innumerable tracks of the changeable hare. Convinced that these beautiful animals abounded around me, still all exertions to obtain a shot failed, although I practised an artifice common among the Indians, and which I have often found successful, viz., walking straight in one direction, and indicating by manner that I am perfectly indifferent to surrounding objects, or that my attention is directed to something on one of the topmost boughs of a distant tree, then turning suddenly round and looking for such animals in your rear who may have imagined they are safe from the star-gazing idiot who has gone by.

But the hares here do not yet appear to be educated up to that standard that would make such trickery succeed.

At length I gained not the river bank, but a large extent of overflow caused by beavers. Within a radius of a couple of hundred square yards I counted eight of their dwellings; and although lately-gnawed

wood, and innumerable fresh tracks spoke distinctly of their still inhabiting this sequestered retreat, an hour's patient waiting did not reward me with a sight of the shy architects.

I could not help thinking what wrong impressions all are liable to imbibe from books and drawings, as I surveyed the residences of these once valuable rodents; for instead of their houses looking like the inverted bowl of a soup ladle—smooth on the surface and regular in form—they resemble more a very ragged but closely pressed-down brush-heap, here and there, particularly on the top, most unsystematically plastered with large clods of mould.

The beavers were paying visits, taking a siesta, or enjoying an early dinner-party, so I came forth from my hiding-place, feeling small—as every one does who attempts a bit of roguery in which he does not succeed; so slipping quietly off, for fear I should be noticed doing so, and jeered at in consequence, I directed my course towards the river. I had not gone above a yard or two when a blue jay proclaimed my presence in his usual ironical laughing call. I looked up, saw the scoundrel; he was surveying me in the ordinary impudent manner of his race; his eye caught mine, and he laughed again in irony. I try never to lose my temper, in fact, be-

lieve I have a pretty good control over it; but would you believe me I could have shot that bird. I was very nearly turning back to do it, for ignorant of what a risk he had run, when my back was turned he derisively chattered after me, knowing doubtless full well that the joke was all on his side. Those blue jays are impudent, saucy scoundrels, and they presume on the knowledge that they are not worth a charge of shot; in fact, like a pettifogging attorney who tries to induce you to kick him, but you desist, not considering that the momentary pleasure you enjoy in doing so is worth the costs for assault of which you would afterwards probably be mulcted.

Gaining the water's edge, I was charmed to see how beautifully the trout were rising. To me there is an attractiveness in following the course of a river when fish are on the feed, so instead of returning to our encampment by cutting across the barren, I resolved to follow the tortuous stream till I reached home.

Stranger, never be induced to adopt such a course; take my word for it if you do so, you will have reason for regret. Three or four times in my life I have allowed myself to be induced to do so, and ere I had done so half an hour, have regretted my decision. To turn back no one likes, it too much

resembles being defeated in something you have pledged yourself to perform, so hoping that every turn, every bend will disclose fewer impediments, you push on.

But, alas! you hope in vain; for the same labyrinths of tangled brush and fallen trees exist, *ad infinitum*, and nine rivers out of ten, straight as they may appear at a cursory glance, are as crooked as ram's horns.

To have a couple of hours' fishing before sunset was doubtless the cause of my hurrying; how often one calculates without his host the sequel will show.

Soon after starting I regretted the step I had taken, for the banks of the stream were choked with snags, windfalls, and creepers; onwards I continued struggling in the hope of gaining easier walking, but my expectations were doomed to disappointment.

A person cannot straddle a log, part bushes, or carry a gun through such obstacles without exposing himself to the flies, and their name was million. Not only did they attack me on the face and hands, but the mosquitoes bit me through my sleeves and trousers, while the black-flies established a branch tunnel communication between my collar and my wristbands and ankles. No express-train system did they adopt, but made wayside stations every-

where, each furnished with a restaurant, my poor body being the ham sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, or anything else they chose to imagine, on which to sup. Too late to turn back, I dreaded the advance, but procrastination was not to be thought of, so I pushed forward.

Such was my plight when I perceived a mink on a point of rock close by. The pelt was worth having, so I fired; but when I reached the place where it stood, the animal struggling in its death throes was nearing the rapids and far beyond my reach. Disappointed, I resumed my journey.

To enlarge upon my difficulties any further would be useless. All I have to say is that it was almost dark before I came in sight of our camp-fire, and that the cheery welcome that the dogs gave me when I approached it, did much to soften the bitterness of my wounded spirits, and, may I add, wounded body.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A CHAPTER of accidents, however, had occurred during my absence ; invariably such is the case when my back is turned.

Sugar's story I will first tell. About noon he heard Poteen barking on the edge of the river a couple of hundred yards above the camp. Skye, true to his character, no sooner heard his companion's voice, than regardless of the boy, rushed off to join in whatever mischief was promised. The lad having every faith in the professions of friendship hourly exhibited by his bedfellow, whistled and called upon the truants to come back, till he was exhausted, but all in vain. Dreading my return, and probably a scolding for not keeping the dogs tied up, to bring them home he went up the river to where both now were fiercely giving tongue. Fortunately he took with him a club, for excepting his knife he had no other arms.

On gaining the spot he immediately learned from

the appearance and manner of the dogs that they had brought to bay in the top of a decayed tree some animal that they were desirous of getting at, but could not reach.

Examination soon discovered a wild-cat kitten about three months old. Indians are never at a loss for expedients, so he made a noose, tied it on the end of a pole, and getting above the creature, slipped it over its head while it was occupied in watching the tactics of its two angry assailants.

So far the game was well played—and triumphantly the lad was preparing to carry home his prize when he was attacked by the female parent in the most ferocious manner. So sudden was her onslaught, that until the assailant was at his feet she had not been seen; however, Poteen made a dash at her and gave her a sample of the pattern of his teeth, but that was all, for as soon as he discovered the foe was determined to fight, and had received some scratches, he retired, Skye in the mean time coming in for the brunt of the battle.

An Indian's courage rarely forsakes him in the most trying ordeal, so dropping the captive kitten he rushed for the relinquished club, and with it renewed the fight. This caused the wild-cat to leave Skye, who by this time was pretty nearly used up,



and devote her energies to the boy; several times the agile lad beat her off; but at length missing his blow, the fiend got inside his reach and fastened on his throat. With characteristic presence of mind Sugar threw himself down, when his sharp-edged knife finished the struggle.

The reader must not think that the North American wild-cat, lucifée, or bay lynx is a contemptible foe, far from it, for although its weight seldom exceeds two or three and twenty pounds, it is one of the most ferocious, active, and dangerous animals of the New World.

Sugar, fortunately, had not suffered as much as his clothes. I believe bringing home the kitten and his dead antagonist softened all pains of body that he felt; but Skye was much mauled, one of his eyes being closed, I fear permanently; even the craven-hearted Poteen had convincing evidence on one leg and along his cheek of how adroitly the foe could handle her teeth and claws. For his mishaps I felt little pity, for if with his superior strength and power of jaw he had assisted the game little terrier, the lad would have been spared, and Skye would have come off with far fewer injuries.

Now to Cariboo. He shot one of his namesakes and left it, intending to return for the hide and tit-bits on his homeward journey. After being absent three

or four hours, on approaching where he had left his game, he found an old she-bear with a couple of cubs in possession. Nothing daunted, he determined to dispute the right of property with mooin, on the ground of prior claims, so advanced under cover within twenty yards of the old lady, who was already busy rending the carcase in pieces.

The Indian being unaccustomed to the use of a double-gun, in some inexplicable manner discharged one barrel before he had taken aim. This *contretemps* disclosed the young Indian's ambush, and the old fiend immediately charged. In the hurry of my attendant to fire a second time he got his finger upon the wrong trigger, and of course with no result: at length just as his antagonist was about to spring on him, he pressed the proper one, and believes he wounded the foe; however, she did not fall, but in the excitement he made his escape and thought himself very fortunate in being spared to narrate his adventure.

This story was told so straightforwardly that I believed it in every detail, more especially as an Indian seldom, I may say never, exaggerates his own performances, and that a double gun is a *rara avis* among them, and only occasionally seen in the possession of a chief.

In spite of skunky smells, the dogs had daily their wounds well washed in salt and water, and

the sores smeared over with oil of tar to protect them from the insects, which resulted in all soon thoroughly recovering from their ailments. On account of the clearing that surrounds it, our camp here, fortunately, is not so much troubled with insect pests as it would otherwise be.

My heart was large that night ; so assuming the duties of medico, I prescribed for each of my two-footed companions, as well as myself—for I had suffered many a break and wound in person as well as in spirits—a nightcap. I can vouch it went down the right way, and that their slumbers, judging from my own, were sounder in consequence.

Next morning Cariboo and I held a council of war on the expediency of visiting the scene of his disaster of yesterday ; the result was that we started after breakfast in the hope of meeting Mrs. Bruin and her progeny.

My associate took up the trail of his former track, and at that long low pace peculiar to his race, without deviation to the right or left, kept it. An Indian when unloaded is a wonderfully rapid walker, and although they do not appear to be making any exertion, slip over the ground at an amazing gait, so fast, in truth, that it required, and then unsuccessfully, every effort of mine to keep up. However, when I wanted a

few minutes' breathing time, I invariably saw some mythical object in the distance that required consideration, and his opinion on what it was. Thus a halt was gained, possibly not very creditably, but none the less necessary, for it never does to show your weakness, as it might lead to liberties being taken, and the Red-man has a blind belief that he is in everything immensely inferior to the white, an impression that never should be allowed to alter.

In about an hour and a half we came to the scene of the contest. The cariboo was nearly all devoured, a circumstance that caused my companion to remark, "I no hit he, I think." The grass and even bushes around were broken down, and some of the bones had been dragged many yards from where the deer had fallen.

If alone I should have now been compelled to give up further pursuit; but the keen eyes of Cariboo soon discovered the trail, which, after he had followed a short distance, the lad, returning to my side, said, *sotto voce*, "He gone to water—I know—close by."

To the water I was led; it was a small pool, the stream that fed it and flowed from it not being over a few inches in diameter, and so sunk in the ground that the herbage completely hid its course.

But at this pool the bears had certainly drank, for

the herbage was trampled upon, and so lately had this occurred that some of the stems that had been crushed down were still in the act of regaining their upright position. Again, as to further proceedings, I should have been stumped, but the innate knowledge that the Indian possesses solved the mystery.

In rather a brush-grown portion of the barrens about a quarter of a mile distant, piled up to a considerable height, lay a number of large boulders. To these the Indian pointed: "Moo in go there to sleep, me think," and forward he stalked towards it. At last gaining its vicinity, we found it such a tangled mass of brush that a dozen instead of three bears might have hid within its closely interlocked masses of vegetation without fear of detection.

I thought better not to state my suspicion, but leave the affair in the hands of one who was immeasurably my superior in wood-craft. At length we wormed ourselves through the dwarf brush and gained silently the highest point of the rocks. The feat was not easy, still it was silently performed. Having gained this perch, earnestly I gazed into every nook and cranny, but failed to discover the objects of our search, so I sat down and would have commenced to smoke, but my attendant stopped me. To humour him more than from any idea that we should find the bears, I returned my tobacco appa-

tus to my pocket, and stretched myself to rest, for keeping up with the Indian had very much fatigued me.

A long half-hour I spent thus, when Cariboo nudged my shoulder, and whispered in my ear, "I see he."

"Where?" I asked.

"There, there; you look along my gun, there."

But blow me if I could.

"Well, you see he?"

"No! I can see nothing but stones and bushes; you must be mistaken."

"You see that sapling? well, look to the left you see white stone, and just beyond that close to root of sumach you see bear."

All this instruction was very lucid, but although I obeyed it to the letter, still my sight refused to gratify me.

"I never see the like afore, he there," again pointing his gun; "he sound asleep," said the lad.

So both of us put fresh cartridges in our guns, and when ready I desired Cariboo to shoot. Long and careful was the aim he took; I could hear the pulsation of my heart in my impatience for the report; at length it came and a roar of pain answered it. That something was hit, I could see from the struggle among



the bushes, and who or what it was we were not long kept in doubt, for the old bear with a cub showed herself for an instant, then she entered the cover from whence the sound of the stricken animal came. It was now obvious that one of the cubs had got the contents of the Indian's gun. Cariboo by this time had loaded the empty barrel, so I told him to watch for a chance and give the other youngster his quietus. Soon an opportunity occurred, and the cub fell dead. However, the report of the gun brought his dam to the front; her head was raised looking in our direction, but not at us, for she had not yet discovered our position. So I took sight and fired for her breast; the shot was not a good one, still it brought her to the ground; but recovering herself she regained her footing and charged upon three legs. As he by this time had reloaded, I retreated behind the Indian to gain time to shove a fresh cartridge into my gun. Ten, eight, six yards only severed us from the foe, and I was about to step to the front, when bang, bang went both my companion's barrels, and the old vixen was incapable of doing further mischief.

It was a good and most exciting forenoon's work, and I was more than pleased with my attendant's performance. The old bear was large but lean to an extreme; the cubs, however, were in prime con-



dition, and under the influence of their mater's tongue had cultivated most beautiful glossy coats.

We got back to camp soon after mid-day, and I went in for an afternoon's fishing, which I most thoroughly enjoyed, for the trout rose freely, and I was not pestered by small fish.

Next morning I crossed the river at the only place we could discover that appeared fordable. The current was so strong that several times I regretted having undertaken my task; however, once started it never would do to turn back, for both my attendants assured me it was impossible, and I had given a deaf ear to their remonstrances. Before entering the water, however, I had taken the precaution of securing a good stout pole of eight or nine feet in length; but for the assistance it rendered me, I should have failed; as it was I got wet to the shoulders, which did not add to my comfort during the tramp that followed.

Passenger pigeons I saw in great numbers throughout the forenoon; heretofore I was under the impression that they did not come so far north. From Audubon's or Wilson's work I doubtless imbibed this idea.

After pushing through some very dense cedar and hemlock swamp thickly interspersed with wind--

falls, I gained a large meadow many hundred acres in extent, with a considerable sized pond in the centre.

The surface of the water was dotted over with a number of different varieties of wild-fowl, the preponderating species being the stately mallard and merganser. The margin of this diminutive lake was so swampy that all attempts to reach it failed. One effort I made nearly cost me dearly, for the crust of the surface which had been swaying up and down, almost rolling like miniature waves, broke under the pressure of my right foot, and but for an amount of activity scarcely to be expected from a person of my figure I would have gone in possibly—yes, and probably over my head. Snipe were here very abundant; doubtless this was a favourite hatching-place—for its solitude and nature exactly suited such a purpose. On a dead pine of great height, decayed and in many places barkless, sat a bald-headed eagle, solitary guardian of the demesne. Scarcely could he have chosen a more suitable throne, for from his perch he could see on all sides what was transpiring among the animal kingdom that formed his principal prey. This bird, emblem of the Great Western Republic, is no more a favourite of mine than of Benjamin Franklin,

for he is a robber, a coward, and a filthy feeder. Yet it cannot be denied that his appearance is noble and his flight majestic.

Although his appetite is so ravenous that scarcely anything comes amiss to his palate, he much prefers to kill his own food; and several times during my observation, with swift and powerful pinion he dashed with the velocity of an arrow on to the surface of the water to seize some thoughtless fish which was basking on the surface.

To kill marauders such as this some deem praiseworthy, but I found him far too wary to permit me within range, even had I desired to do so, which I did not, for they occupy a useful place in the animal creation.

After a detour of two or three miles I came upon a lovely little rivulet; beneath my feet where I struck it was a perpendicular fall of six or seven yards in height, and as I gazed into the rocky recesses of a pool beneath I saw an otter feeding on a trout he had just captured. I got a fair shot at the poacher, but although the distance was short and the animal severely wounded, he managed to struggle into the water.

Determined, however, to secure the hide, I ran down to a shallow ford below, which could not be

passed without the animal affording me a second shot. My supposition that he would make for this, so as to get down the course of the stream, was correct, for scarcely had I gained my stand before it appeared. Blood was flowing profusely from the creature's head and shoulders, still he looked as if he had plenty of vitality left to gain a hiding-place, so I gave him the second barrel. In length from nose to end of tail this trophy must have measured five feet, a size that is quite unusual; his coat was a beautiful dark chestnut brown, and although the fur was rather short, still was in excellent order. The vitality of the otter is quite remarkable; with the exception of the wild-cat I doubt if any animal in the American forests require more killing.

For a long time the Canadian otter was considered identical with the European species, but scientific men have now decided otherwise; for independent of variation in size and colour, they are discovered to possess osteological differences. On the Pacific coast of North America there is another recognised distinct species to be found.

On my route campward I came across a piece of open stony land entirely without trees or brush; it was covered with the most delicious little wild strawberries, the only objection being that they were so

small that a person could eat much more rapidly than gather them.

Got home in good time and found that Cariboo, in my absence, had packed the bear-skins home. He is invaluable on such an excursion, for he is not only an expert hunter, but willing and obliging, and perfectly unassuming.

In the course of conversation in the evening he informed me that there was a bare bluff, some distance down this side of the river, where a white man had been buried. So I started at early day to find it.

The weather was not promising, for the clouds were low, and the wind in its feeling spoke of rain. Although making the landscape look sombre, still good resulted in two ways; the heat ceased to be oppressive and the flies troublesome, so right briskly I trudged along, passing in my way the rocky hillock where the bears had been killed the day before. Two families of ptarmigan I disturbed; the young of one brood were able to fly a considerable distance. From their size I should imagine that they must have been quite two months old—rather an early hatching for this neighbourhood.

A couple of miles before I reached my destination I felt convinced that I could distinguish the object of my search, for a mound like a cairn of stones was con-

spicuous on the summit of a knoll which slanted at an angle of forty-five degrees towards the river. After half an hour's further trudge I found my surmises were correct. Stones of all portable sizes and of every possible shape had been thrown together, forming a heap eight or nine feet in height; by its side laid a rude cross, chiselled out of a slab of stone, brought up doubtless from the river bed. I should have liked to replace this emblem of our faith in its original position, but all my efforts to move it were abortive. Where the upright stem was crossed by the horizontal arms some letters were apparent, but all I could decipher were the capitals.

Is it surprising when I say that I sat here for more than an hour, and conjured up all sorts of visions in respect to its origin?

First, I thought it might possibly be a soldier's grave; and the muffled note of the drum, the Dead March in Saul, and firing parties, with all the impressive ceremonies of such a funeral floated before me; but more mature consideration told me that civilisation had not got sufficiently advanced in this lone land to make that possible. Then I saw, in thought, one who, to preach the Gospel to the heathen, had expatriated himself from all he held dear, borne up the steep hill brow to be placed in his last,

long resting-place by loving and devoted followers, far, so far from the land of his nativity. Or, again, it occurred to me that this out-of-the-way grave might be occupied by some hardy, energetic servant of the all-powerful Hudson Bay Company, who had succumbed under the privation inseparable from their exposed life; but the cross—why the cross? From it I was pleased to think that here reposed the mortal remains of one of its servants.



## CHAPTER XIX.

CLOSER and closer to earth came the clouds ; a drop or two of rain called me from the realms of fancy, and hurriedly I started homewards. My step had not the energy of the morning, my spirits had lost their buoyancy ; and, unmindful of scenery, I trudged slowly homewards. What a burlesque was the place I was going to on the name. With each mile the rain increased, and the distant surroundings became less distinct, while from behind and to the eastward, a thick mist seemed bent on overtaking me. Soon it succeeded, and although not possessed of that amount of impenetrability peculiar to fogs in London or on the banks of Newfoundland, still it closed the horizon of my vision so effectually that all beyond a hundred yards was an unknown world, and with the fog the rain descended faster, not the large reckless drops of

the thunderstorm, but minute particles so numerous that they speedily penetrated through the thickest parts of my clothing. Onward I tramped, confident in my power to regain camp; one, two, three hours passed, and at length it commenced to dawn upon me that I was lost. Till the darkness of night commenced to settle over the gloomy landscape I struggled hard not to admit the fact. Unwilling as I was to acknowledge that my skill in woodcraft was so deficient as to place me in such a position, yet much as I disliked it I could no longer disguise from myself the fact that I was lost.

If I had been in the timber-lands such a *contre-temps* would not have been so serious, for soon I could have built a shelter and made a resting-place of birch or hemlock boughs; but out on the barrens, with scarcely a bush upon it larger than a dwarf ornamental shrub, it was a serious affair.

Knowing full well that I must now remain absent from the camp all night, I made a virtue of necessity out of my position, so sought and soon found a rock of sufficient elevation to shelter me from the drift.

Constant exertion for half an hour rewarded me with a few good armfuls of rotten but wet sticks, out of which to make a fire, but long and tedious were my efforts to coax them to burn. Through the

assistance of my gun I obtained sparks which I nursed into sickly blazes, again and again to go out when applied to the damp wood. But each short-lived flame had not been without benefit, for their repeated application had dried the lower portions of the boughs, till an ultimate effort succeeded in forming the nucleus of a fire.

Before this amount of success had rewarded my efforts, I feared to leave the place I had selected to remain in, lest I should be unable to refind it. Now I had it for a beacon, so I became confident, and wandered off in each direction till I had collected an ample supply of sticks to keep up a good fire through the long hours of night, for independent of it affording warmth, the society of a ruddy blaze almost makes up for the want of companions.

Argue as I would with myself that thousands were more uncomfortable, that I was rather to be envied than otherwise, I could not close my eyes, and the wolves, wild-cats, and Canadian owls seemed to contend with each other which could produce the most weird-like sounds.

Just before break of day this concert reopened, for it had flagged a little after midnight, and the exertions of each contestant seemed to be redoubled.

Never did storm-tossed mariner wish for land, never

did patient crave for the night to pass, more than I longed for break of day. At length a perceptible light on the eastern horizon, which rose gradually and slowly towards the zenith as I gazed upon it, informed me that my longing was about to be gratified. And if I had wanted no other indication of the dawn, I might have known it was at hand, for the nocturnal animals had one by one ceased to grieve that the hours of darkness were over.

With the rise of the sun the fog disappeared, and the rain ceased. Little observation of the surrounding objects disclosed my position. I was within three hundred yards of where the bears had been shot, thus accounting for the unusual gathering of flesh-feeders, who had doubtless been attracted to the locality by the carrion.

Hurriedly I pushed for camp, not to surprise its inmates asleep, as I expected, but to find both sitting up after having passed a most anxious night. My appearance startled them; in a moment they sprung to their feet and rushed to my side. Sugar took my hand and kissed it without saying a word. At this I was not surprised, for he had been long with me, and before entering my service he had never known kindness; but when a few moments afterwards Cariboo, looking sheepish and awkward, did the same, I felt

I was not without true friends, far, far as I was from civilisation.

My absence, I learned, had caused both great alarm, and that instead of cowering over the camp-fire, or enjoying the shelter that our temporary resting-place afforded, they had been looking for me in every direction imagination told them I might have taken. How fatiguing and earnest had been their search, their haggard features and exhausted expression confirmed.

Treat an Indian kindly, make allowance for his defalcations, reprove him when he does wrong, but do so more in sorrow than anger, and if he is not a drunkard, or under the influence of ardent spirits, a more faithful, loving servitor, the world cannot produce. A white man who practices bear and forbear, they learn almost to idolise, for their predisposition is to look up to him as a superior being.

I have not the slightest doubt that these primitive children of nature would have at any moment risked their lives to save mine ; whether I was struggling in the surging abyss of the swiftest rapid, or in the embrace of the fiercest bear ; therefore, is it a wonder that wherever the missionary has gained a hearing among them his influence has become dominant, unless the sordid gain-loving trader encroached upon his flock, and demoralised them with the soul-

debasement staple of their trade, ardent spirits, and with it altering the trusting, confiding aborigines into veritable fiends?

Although the sun was now high in the heavens, I craved for rest, so as soon as breakfast was discussed I turned in, giving permission to Sugar to accompany his companion wherever they chose to go, I promising to take care of camp in their absence.

Never did I sleep more soundly, but my rest was troubled with a thousand strange dreams, so that when I awoke I was as unrefreshed as when I lay down.

My head throbbed, my pulse rapidly beat, my skin felt hot, and a sensation of unaccountable languor had taken possession of my limbs.

Convinced that I was going to be ill, I yet struggled against it with all the determination I could command. Even the dogs, who had sufficiently recovered to be permitted to run at large, seemed to be aware that something was wrong and to regard me with more than ordinary affection, exchanging their inclinations to roam about for a desire to sit by my side.

At length evening came, and with it returned the lads. I welcomed them in the cheeriest manner I could, or at least made an effort to do so; but their keen eyes soon told them that I was unwell.



Thoroughly prostrated I retired to my couch, and two weeks passed before I was able to sit up or recognise my faithful watchers. That period is a dream to me, but how trying must it have been to my attendants.

July 12th. — About noon my unconsciousness passed away, and my mind's wanderings assumed a rational form. Cariboo entered the shed of boughs in which I reposed; it had been rethatched and strengthened, the better to shelter me. As he gazed upon my face, every lineament of his features denoting the most serious alarm, I spoke. "Thanks, Cariboo," were the words I said. In a moment he knelt by my side, and with a woman's softness took both my hands in his. No tear suffused his eye; but without it he looked the perfect ideal of gratitude. After a pause he raised his voice, and Sugar joined him in an instant.

The lad's features when I addressed him beamed with joy; silently he came close to me. Exerting my strength I patted him on the cheek, and the poor child clasped my hand and burst into a perfect torrent of tears.

Struggling to recover himself, with an effort he regained sufficient composure to speak.

"Capen, I thought you on the way to meet the Great Manitoo. Suppose he have taken you, I no



wish to stay behind ; because I too bad to go, he leave you with me a little time more."

Until I became convalescent the attention of these two untutored sons of the forest was perfectly touching. They never for a moment left me alone, and their instincts seemed to teach them to anticipate my slightest wish. I had but to move my hand, when, whichever was near would be at my side ; nor did night, that period of rest, seem one iota to lessen their vigilance. Generally each day Cariboo went to hunt ; and instead of confining himself to large game or fur-bearing animals, a squirrel or two, a grouse, or some wild-duck, he also killed, as he knew my appetite, which had become most fastidious, preferred them. Moreover the meat tea, more properly soup from its thickness, never was permitted to get cold, or the supply run low, in fact, to this valuable stimulant I credit my rapid recovery of strength.

True, it was too strong to take large quantities of, but that did not prevent me applying to it frequently. And such beautiful trout, brought to the camp alive, were prepared for me with an attention and cleanliness that would have tempted the most fastidious palate.

The mode of cooking them by the lads is well

worth mention, for it is deserving of being followed in a civilised household. With the aid of a hunting knife and axe they had riven out a rather long shingle. On this the fish, having been split open down the back and the vertebræ removed, the whole carefully washed and all particles of blood removed, was pinned flat with small wooden pegs. It was then placed in front of a clear wood-ash fire, a piece of deer fat being attached over whichever happened to be the upper end, so that the grease might drip over the trout, and saturate it; less than ten minutes sufficed, if the fire was good, for the morceau to be thoroughly ready for consumption, and the flavour was perfect.

Another delicacy I enjoyed through the forethought of the lads, was large quantities of whortleberries, blueberries, and raspberries. At this season of the year the two former are found abundant on the edge of the swamps, the latter on the barrens. Half an hour each day was devoted to their collection, a little basket of birch bark lined with leaves, and filled with these wild fruit, invariably being found by me at my bedside if I slept longer than usual in the morning. And oh how refreshing they were to my parched mouth and throat! Lonely I doubtlessly felt, but still could not help thinking how much

better I was situated than I could possibly have expected under the circumstances. The flies, too, had disappeared, a blessing for which it would be impossible for me to be sufficiently grateful, as in my weak state I was powerless to resist them.

Of an afternoon before the atmosphere got chilly, I would take a seat outside the camp, for the breeze playing on my temples always freshened me up. The flights of wild-ducks passing up or down the stream, the noisy, garrulous kingfishers and blue jays, in this land so like each other, quarrelling and squabbling for no conceivable cause, and the woodpeckers' indefatigable tap, tap, tapping on hollow limb, or blithely running round the trunk, to take unawares any prey that thought by such a movement of finesse to escape, ever afforded me amusement, and caused time to flit by on rapid wing.

I had felt sufficiently strong one evening to reach the river. Some Canadian crows, more resembling the raven than our rook, caw! caw! caw! passed overhead, as they winged their way to their roosting place. In itself such a sight might be regarded as a trifle, still it had the effect of recalling a hundred sunny memories of distant home and happy days.

Cariboo returned that evening with no greater reward for a long day's work than a porcupine, a

most acceptable addition to the larder; but the lad was not satisfied, and blamed himself for not having reaped a better reward, for he had seen plenty of deer and two bears. To his want of success regarding the first, he attributed the blame to the wolves, whom, he said, " Were altogether getting too plenty, so keep chasing cariboo all day, and most part of the night." If this is the case it is an indication that the game is returning south.

Having much improved in health, I have resolved that if all goes well in the interim we shall leave here in two days, and when I state my determination, smiles and approval meet it from my followers. Although true that both my attendants have lately had an easy time, still while I was sick both seemed to labour under great depression of spirits, and they, with the superstition peculiar to their race, doubtless associate this place with that misfortune, so long to remove to new scenes.

Skye affords me many a laugh. At the root of a stump close by my favourite seat on the river side, a chipmunk or ground squirrel has its nest; for want of larger game the dog devotes itself to the capture of this pretty little creature; but for cunning and impudence he is more than matched. If driven into its hole, as soon as the pursuer retires it will

come forth, get on the top of a stump, and chatter to attract his attention, then comes a charge, resulting in Skye's being too late. This is repeated several times, and always with the same termination. At length the dog resorts to strategy, and gets behind the stump watching the hole, but no chipmunk comes forth, the little rogue knows too much for that. Tired with watching, my little four-footed friend returns to my side, in a few moments his tormentor is again out chattering at him derisively. Sunset promises a fine day on the morrow; if such occurs, we commence our journey southwards.

While packing up our various effects ready for an early start, Antoine's name happened to be mentioned, when Cariboo pricked up his ears and with much earnestness in his face, said, "Antoine bad white man, remember me tell you so, Cap." This was the second time I had received gratuitous information on this subject, and on each occasion from persons that could not have any possible advantage to gain by maligning him.

I cannot say that I had ever taken a great liking to this half-breed Frenchman, and I had frequently regarded him with eyes of suspicion, when he has narrated with chuckling satisfaction how he had cheated a family of Indians out of their fall or

summer hunt collection of furs, or how he had discovered where their cache or storehouse was secreted, and pillaged it when the proprietors' backs were turned. Of course a man who would do such dishonest things to one class would to another, although he would say if he thought I did not enter into his feelings in the affair, "Remember, Cap, they only Indian."

However, I was commencing to think, from his continued absence, that the confidence I had placed in him was about to be abused, and that I should never again see the stores I had supplied him or their value, although at the time they were exchanged from my guardianship to his, he took oaths by every saint in the calendar, used a whole spelling-book of "sacres" that nothing would make him break his word. Nevertheless, it is most unfair to condemn a man without a hearing, and accident or illness may have detained him at some distant hunting-post, possibly he even might be dead. Unfriendly Red-skins, too, might have crossed his path, swollen rivers washed him away, dead limbs fallen upon him in the deep recess of the forest, or that fearful gun of his, the most antiquated rattletrap piece of firearms I had almost ever seen, which he invariably fed with a double load, have blown his carcass



into the four points of the wind. No, I will suspend my judgment for another month ; and then, if I hear nothing, give him the benefit of the doubt that one of the above chapter of accidents has overtaken him.

Although I had so long been an invalid during our stay at our half-island encampment, I did not turn my back to it without feelings of regret. Every stump, every rock, every bush, every tree had become familiar, and was associated with some little episode or other : under the one a chipmunk, the pretty little *tamias* of America, had its storeroom ; under the next was an earth that looked much as if an otter occasionally resorted to its deep intricacies for rest or safety ; in the bunch of witch-hazel I had secreted myself to get a shot at teal on their way to and from their feeding-place, and it was the favourite shelter for a hermit thrush, who often continued his charming modulated song long after midnight ; and as to the summits of the taller trees, was there one of them on which I had not observed the charming cedar-bird, sole American representative of the European waxwing ? Yes, at this season of the year it was a charming resting-place for poet or painter, one that possessed so many attractions that verses must have flown in abundance from the brain of the former and the hand of the latter be induced to rival



nature in her beauteous shades and lights. It was all I say at this season, but what would it resemble in winter, when deep snows covered the earth, when ice loaded down the water, and the powerful frost-laden north wind screeched through the valley, and shook the giant timbers in its boisterous grasp—when all the landscape that surrounded it was a howling wilderness? Well, such was the change that would come over it in the space of a few short months.

“ Well, my lads, are you ready ; got everything, forgotten nothing ? ” were the words I addressed to my attendants as they stood by me ready for the start.

“ Yes, Cap, everything.”

“ Well, off you go.” And shouldering their packs, which were far from small, away they started, light in heart, and with that long] panther-like stride that steals them so rapidly over the ground. I lingered among the *débris*, scattered over the hemlock boughs, threw down the camp-poles, and took a last glance around to see that nothing had been forgotten, then turned slowly to follow the course of my attendants, little Skye trotting close to my heels ; faithful little fellow, how different was he from Poteen, who, as was his custom, preferred the society of the Indians. The only way I could account for this evidence of

bad taste was that he was a half-bred brute, with more of the father's than the mother's instincts.

Our marches were not to be hurried, for we had plenty of time, and I was still far from sufficiently strong to endure much fatigue, still I carried a pack—it was certainly a small one—but for the sake of example I thought it better not to spare myself, although both lads strongly protested against my doing so and begged me hard to have its contents divided amongst them. That day's tramp it did feel heavy, and the strap with which it was supported across my shoulders, in whatever position I placed it, kept incessantly galling my collar-bones. Sheer determination alone enabled me to hold out; but when we came to our evening halt, not over eight miles from where had been our late home, I was completely done up. The boys had seen several cariboo during the day, and were several minutes within shot of a splendid buck, which by description was as large as a moose; of course, this was a stretch of imagination, but it doubtless was a very fine animal, as these timber reindeer, in contradistinction to those of the far north distant barrens, sometimes exceed five hundred pounds in weight.

Some fresh trout procured by Sugar, the remnants of a grouse, ptarmigan, and squirrel chowder re-

warmed, formed my supper, and so refreshed did I feel after my appetite was satisfied, that I felt convinced I should much more satisfactorily perform my tramp on the morrow.

The morning was fine but hazy, and as we were about to shoulder our loads the boy pointing through the mist whispered, "There, Cap, you see over that rock cariboo." In a moment after I discovered them; from their feeding as they walked forward, I felt convinced they were unaware of our proximity. Anxious to please the lad, and to give him an opportunity of exhibiting his skill, I offered him my gun, and told him to let me see if he was a good hunter. Taking the weapon from my hand in an instant he was out of sight; I believe his celerity of movement was induced for fear I should change my mind. Seizing Poteen by the ear to prevent his following the boy, and possibly marring his shot, the other Indian with myself availed ourselves of the shelter produced by the back of a boulder, the better to see the stalk and its result. A quarter of an hour might have elapsed when a puff of smoke caught my eye. Instantly following the direction it indicated, I perceived one of the deer ineffectually struggling to follow its comrades who were now fleeing across the barren in Indian file, at their customary sharp trot-

ting gait. "Why don't the brat put in the second barrel?" I began to wonder, when the cariboo gave evidence of falling, but before it had quite lost its limbs the boy overtook it, and his knife did the rest of the work. It was a clever stalk, a good shot, and the finale was thoroughly workman-like, and when I told the lad what I thought of his performance he looked an inch taller at least, and as proud as a peacock with two tails.

Having examined a great number of cariboo horns from different parts of the American continent, the formation of the antlers of those that I or my followers have killed are almost identical with such as have been brought from Labrador, loftier, thinner, wider spread, with the palmation more confined to the tops than such as I have seen from the island of Newfoundland—the brow antlers again being larger and more prominent than those of the last-mentioned.

The flies having entirely disappeared from the barren grounds, it is Cariboo's opinion that the reason more deer are seen on our homeward route, is because migration to the south has commenced, and that we have now come in contact with the advance guard. When conversing on the habits of this animal I find my Indian does not coincide in that most current

belief that the palmated antler was intended by the Creator for clearing away the snow to enable its owner to obtain food in winter; for he says, "I never see him do so but with his foot, and I know cariboo most as well as my own people." This is no exaggeration, the American aborigines uncontaminated by frequent intercourse with white men, know the habits of the wild animals as well as they do the features of the members of their tribe.

END OF VOL. I.

# LONE LIFE:

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"PRAIRIE AND FOREST," "GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," "AFLOAT AND ASHORE,"  
"ALL ROUND THE WORLD," "A HUNTER'S ADVENTURES IN THE  
FAR WEST," "PRAIRIE FARMS AND PRAIRIE FOLKS,"  
"ACCESSIBLE FIELD SPORTS," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1875.





# LONE LIFE :

## A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS.



### CHAPTER I.

LAST night, although still August, we had frost; I should think the thermometer cannot have gone down more than a degree or two beneath freezing point; its effect, however, is quite apparent on the trees and bushes, for the various shades of green, except in the coniferous trees, have become tipped with gold, or burnished copper-colour. The result is charming to the eye, and imparts a softness to the distance that previously did not exist.

Gradually we have increased the length of the day's travel, till we have succeeded in passing each night at our old camping grounds. The air is so pure in these uplands, that the sojourner seems to

drink it in with relish, and every respiration appears to impart fresh strength and vigour. How many are there who have means at their command, still suffer from various ailments that a residence on or tour over these barrens would benefit, still they remain at home. Such may be apathy to the result, it surely cannot be indolence. Let them pull themselves together, make a start, cease not in their purpose till they have arrived here, and in two months they will return new men.

At length we reached the lake. Cariboo's keen eyes soon detected indications that strangers had visited the place since our departure, and therefore felt a little anxious for fear our canoe had been misappropriated ; however, such a serious mishap had not befallen us. That the unknown did not belong to his people, he satisfied me, and that white men were among them he felt perfectly certain.

On inquiring how he knew this, he pointed out two different sized tracks ; the feet that made them wore moccasins, but the toes were turned out in their walk.

“ White man walk this way,” said he, grinning, turning his toes out to an absurd extent. “ Indian, so,” placing each foot down parallel to the other. Thus the sand at the mouth of the stream told me that I was not the only white man who had visited this remote spot.

I have mentioned with what a splendid rapid this rivulet hurled its waters into the lake. It even looked more attractive now than previously, and the trout played in the dancing current in countless thousands.

Soon I got my rod together, and in the space of half an hour had landed more than we could well consume, although our appetites were none of the smallest. The fish, however, did not run large, all being about the same size, namely, a little exceeding two pounds.

The weather became very close towards night, and all animal life, except the owls, wondrously still; these creatures, on the contrary, were remarkably vociferous; laughing, screeching, and swearing, as if in their selfishness they considered there were no others than themselves in the universe, or that if there were, that they had exactly the same taste as themselves in what constituted melody.

Cariboo says it is going to rain, the scud overhead caused me to think that a gale is portended; but as we have a good camp in an admirably-situated position, it does not matter whether it blows high or low, or that the rains should descend with all the mad reckless impetus of the thunder-storm.

When we awoke in the morning it had done both,

so each took credit for being weatherwise and congratulated himself on his ability to decipher what the pages of heaven had written on them.

About nine the rain ceased, but the wind freshened, while the waves upon the lake being no longer beat down by its fury, increased to such an extent, that the observer would have imagined as he gazed upon them, that he was looking over old Father Ocean in one of his fitful moods. The Indians, nothing loth, were ready for a start; to acquiesce in their desire would have entailed a long paddle, possibly danger, certainly a wetting, for the white horses reared their heads angrily on every portion of the lake that was unsheltered from the blast, therefore I resolved to postpone embarkation till the morrow.

Cariboo evidently would have preferred that the delay had not occurred, still he said nothing, did not even grumble, but, looking grumpy, took his gun and went off for a hunt, while Sugar and self got the canoe round to the mouth of the river, for its *embouchure* was well sheltered from being on the weather shore, and tried the trout. Going beyond the water I had fished last night, the boy held the craft by a pole, and I, having mounted a large salmon fly, commenced work.

The trout were famished with hunger, if an opinion can be formed from the voracity they displayed to take

my lure, and the deeper water that I was whipping possessed heavier fish than those I had captured the previous evening. After an hour and a half of work I ceased for lunch, renewing the sport about five; by sunset I had close on three dozen, several of which exceeded four pounds, one I am certain would have turned the scale at six. But for my rod being so light I might have doubled the number; for after landing a fish I was generally fast in another at the second or third cast.

Off the mouth of this stream the trout were collected in uncountable numbers, evidently waiting for the water of it to rise to enable them to proceed to their favourite spawning beds. An extraordinary thing—at least it would be deemed so in England—was that the fish totally disregarded the canoe; even under its bottom many could be seen, as if they totally ignored its presence.

With the decline of the sun returned the Indian. In his hand was a fisher; although not aquatic he had killed it on the margin of the lake, localities they are especially fond of. The largest of the tree-martins, in contradistinction to the genus to which it belongs, its fur is somewhat coarse. It has a very prominent and peculiarly expressive eye, still is a perfect fiend in nature. The Indians regard it as a great medicine, and eat certain portions of

its body to imbue them with courage; what part I did not discover, for the slayer objected to enlighten me, supposing doubtless that I should laugh at his superstition. However, so highly did he value his prize that he did not now regret the delay caused by not starting in the morning, proved amply by his glum looks having disappeared, and his tongue wagging with more than usual volubility.

Next morning the gale having somewhat subsided, we got under way, each handling his paddle with such vigour that we soon left the shelter of the land, and were dancing about among the white-capped waves. Our craft behaved splendidly; it was as buoyant as a cork, but from being high out of the water, required an immense amount of elbow-grease to propel it forward. Not being in training I soon got fatigued; but cease my labours as long as I was able to hold out I could not, for it required the combined efforts of all to make headway against wind and sea. By the elevation of the sun there remained but a couple of hours till it set, yet only half the distance intended had been accomplished. A barren ridge of rock without timber was to leeward; from its uninviting appearance I scarcely liked to propose it as a halting-place. However, it was evident all were getting exhausted, and although slowly crawling to windward, still making quite as much in-drift. Nearer

and nearer we approached the inhospitable jumble of stones, the waves beat relentlessly on its shore, and numerous spaces of white foam near at hand told that the bottom was irregular, and that jagged boulders in places almost reached the surface. We all did our utmost. Cariboo in the stern toiled with super-human strength, and if a way always followed a will, we should have succeeded in weathering the reef. Momentarily I felt we were getting nearer and nearer to danger, at length as we tumbled off the crest of an unusually big wave, there was a 'grating sound, then a ripping noise, and the water boiled in through the bottom of the canoe, an aperture having been torn nearly a foot in length.

Cariboo was equal to the emergency. Retaining hold of the stern, he dropped into the water, and in hurried words begged us to do likewise, for unless we followed his advice, we should lose guns and everything. Sugar took the water like a musquash, I followed suit and struck out for land; fifty yards I had scarcely traversed when I commenced to feel exhausted. Straightening myself to feel for bottom, I thankfully touched it. Between wading and swimming I was soon on *terra firma*, the boy having preceded me by some minutes.

The Indian never better proved his worth than on this occasion; he kept his hold upon our shipwrecked



craft and forced it, by almost superhuman efforts, before him, for being lightened of a good portion of its freight the leak happily did not gain so rapidly.

Cariboo fortunately soon got into his depth, but the difficulty was where to effect a landing for the canoe; soon this was discovered, and all our property, wet certainly, was safely landed.

A more cheerless night than that I do not think I ever passed. There was no shelter to be obtained, and little if any firewood sufficiently dry to burn, still we had every reason to be thankful, for if the accident had occurred further from shore, I believe I never could have succeeded in reaching it, and more than probable all my goods would have found a resting-place in the bottom of the lake.

In the morning I arose cramped and miserable, every bone in my body had found out a new ache, for the softest level surface I could find to lie on was the top of a honeycombed rock, and my system rebelled against such treatment. An indifferent meal, however, did much to mitigate my pains, but when the canoe was inspected I became sick at heart, for I felt convinced it never could be made sufficiently seaworthy to take us away, although the lake had now become as calm as a mill-pond.

Unfortunately such a *contretemps* had not been anticipated, so no gum for caulking was among our

gear, still the two Indians laboured sedulously, picking a piece off here and a piece off there, from wherever they thought it could be spared, still their industry and skill failed to make it sufficiently buoyant to carry all. After supper Cariboo proposed starting at once alone, promising to bring aid as soon as possible. I did not envy the plucky lad the trip, for in a few minutes after he was afloat the canoe's floor was flooded; however, he was confident, pointed laughingly to the baling scoop, and with a deep, strong stroke, sailed off into the darkness.

Another night of discomfort; even the dogs seem to feel and testify their disapprobation by constant restlessness. Thank goodness, ere noon came relief had arrived; if I had been detained here much longer I believe I should have possessed as many callosities on my person as a camel.

A welcome greeting our deliverers received, for I knew, or had met, them all before, the old chief as steersman occupying the seat of honour; and lustily did they hang to their paddles, almost lifting their light craft from the water. Four o'clock saw us entering the little bay, and a crowd upon the beach waiting to greet our arrival.

The whole hamlet had, in fact, turned out, and a merry laugh or kindly nod met me on every side. The old squaw warmly clasped my hand, and pronounced

something I did not quite catch, the others lauding her sentiment. And Saucy was there—resplendent in her brilliant bronze complexion and graceful form. Fawn-like she approached me, and after pronouncing some pretty compliment, took my gun from my hand and led the way to the wigwam of her father. Never was guest more warmly welcomed, or worn-out hunter more solicitously guarded; and truly I required all this consideration, for I felt that my frame was thoroughly demoralised, so yawned and gave other indications of sleepiness long before the hour for retiring had arrived.

But these kind simple people understood my want; a splendid bearskin was spread on the floor for a bed, my pack placed close at hand, so ere the second pipe had been consumed, I was away, far away in distant lands, at least in dreams.

Next morning I learned, from the old chief, that Antoine had returned; he did not forget to add, “He bad white man;” he further informed me that he had left and gone off north, to where the white squaw lived; further, that he had taken Fatty-plumpy with him, whom the old man vowed he had stolen. Still, he added, if he was kind to her, he could forgive him, for she was better as his squaw than as an Indian’s.

I had remarked the girl’s absence, but did not

choose to take notice of it, for fear my interest might be misconstrued. From the estimate I had formed of her character I did not think that much inducement would be required to cause her to elope; but I felt certain her future life would have been far happier if she had united herself to one of her own race. Poor, fat, chubby, impulsive child, I feared she had made a sorry bed, from which she was never likely to be able to muster sufficient resolution to tear herself.

But who was this white squaw I had heard so often mentioned? To all my inquiries I get one answer, "Missionary squaw." Can it be possible for a white woman to be so self-sacrificing as to dwell alone in these wilds?

Antoine's sudden return and as rapid disappearance without visiting me, struck me as strange. What could it portend? My late residence was no secret, and he might have learnt it if he desired. Long I brooded and thought over the matter, and was still more deeply involved in mystery afterwards than before.

For an extremely moderate remuneration—in fact, at first he positively refused to listen to any proposal of payment for the service—the old chief agreed to transport myself, Sugar, and all my belongings to

the shanty, and send my canoe, which had now been thoroughly repaired, across the portage.

Bidding all farewell, Cariboo promising to join me in a few days, we embarked on board one of the large family crafts, and soon doubled the point, and threading the intricacies of the river, beautiful in its solitude, ever varying, ever changing, ever lovely sunset soon brought us in view of our hut, over which truly hung an air of desolation.

When back some days, the old shanty and its little surrounding clearing looked as cheerful as ever. What is it that imparts such an air of comfort to it now we are returned? Well, I will tell you—that clear white wreath of smoke ascending from the chimney does the whole thing; it is the finishing touch to the picture, life to the body it inhabits. My Indian friends, although I have now returned some days, have not yet departed for their home. Of course they are my guests and live at my expense; for none so far have done anything in the shape of hunting, except it be to dawdle an hour or two away by the river, and return at its termination with a string of trout. Feeding them I must not be imagined for a moment to grudge, they would do as much for me; but half a dozen Red-skins, independent of my own family circle, within the confined limits of my dwelling, tries ventilation rather hard.

The first night I put up with it, I was too tired to be fastidious; but the second was more than I could bear; it recalled vividly one never to be forgotten—that succeeding our landing in the Gulf of Petuli to invest the Taku Forts. The whole encampment was a swamp of the most dismal kind, sticky and clammy as a paddy-field that had just absorbed the water with which it had been flooded. The rain fell in one uninterrupted drenching down-pour, soaking everything from food to clothing; while the wind, although not particularly high, was sufficiently so to prevent a tent standing, where it could not obtain the support of well-braced storm-ropes; but that was impossible, for the earth was without consistency, and pegs seemed to be extracted from it even with greater facility than the mallet drove them down.

The prospect of a night exposed to such weather was very far from pleasant, but there appeared to be no alternative. As an old forager I was expected to devise some plan to lessen our misery; in fact, if I had failed to do so, I felt convinced I should wondrously sink in the estimation of those that surrounded me. But I believed that I was over-taxed, and that only some unseen stroke of good luck could save me. Leaving the conclave of miserables, I poked about in every direction. Examining critically



the jumble of stones and mud that had once formed human habitations, hoping material might even be found to make a floor, and possibly an overhead shelter ; but long was my search fruitless. At length trying to disengage an old beam, which doubtless had at one time done duty for a rafter, from amid the *débris* in which it was partially imbedded, I discovered an aperture, which, on being enlarged, exposed an entrance to a pig-stye. On examination I found it possessed a roof which could be made water-tight by spreading over it one or two tents ; but the floor was filthy, the dirtiest family of pigs in all China must have possessed it for a domicile through many, many successive generations.

Calling my servant and some of the men, we shovelled out the *débris*, hoping to get to the bottom of the richly manured soil ; but such was a fruitless job, for the earth was saturated, not for a few inches, but I believe to the depth of an ordinary grave. However, the place, bad as it was, was better than the open swamp, so I had several bales of forage brought in and deeply strewn on the floor. Over this came our water-proofs, and the eight or nine brother officers who crowded into the stye's limited space, voted me a good fellow and a prince among old campaigners.



It was no use being fastidious ; each thought he perceived something highly objectionable to his sensitive nose, but believing that prejudice in occupying a tenement which had been devoted to such a purpose had much to do with it, said nothing on the subject. Before midnight the trumpeting of numerous nasal organs proclaimed that all had entered dreamland.

The *reveillé* sounded at the usual hour ; prompt to the call all sprung up ; but, oh ! the smell that greeted them. To stand it now they had returned from oblivious sleep was impossible, so forth each rushed as he had risen from his couch. Salt pork was unfortunately among our rations ; for months afterwards I never looked at a piece of it without remembering its producers were cousins, English or American, to the very dirty creatures that inhabited the sty on the Gulf of Petuli.

Well, such was the smell, at least it was a gentle, although undeniable reminder of the past, that saluted my nostrils when I awoke the second morning, so I forthwith made fresh regulations in my household, that with exception of the chief and his daughter, the remainder of the escort should sleep out-doors.

No way disconcerted at my decision, they in a few

hours had built a very snug bough-house about a hundred yards from the shanty, and seemed to enjoy its shelter with the greatest amount of satisfaction.

After the habit of such establishments they always had an ample blazing fire going, which at night showed off the dark figures that crouched about it, and caused lights and shadows to flit or dance around that would have delighted the eye of any artist.

I should have been pleased if the old chief and his child had joined this coterie, but the old aristocrat showed no inclination to do so, and as I had not been above sharing his wigwam, it would have been a case of base ingratitude on my part to propose such a thing to him ; however, the same consideration I did not show for Master Sugar, as the breath of three mature persons I considered was as much as a shanty, twelve feet by eight, could stand, if due respect was paid to sanitary considerations.

## CHAPTER II.

PARTIAL as I am to shooting, there are many days that, although I take my gun with me, for you never know in a wild country when it may be required, I go forth simply for a wander and to enjoy the brilliant woodland scenery, or to study the habits and watch the eccentricities of animal life.

It is not unusual, at least I have known it so before, to have a short space of Indian summer as a forerunner of the season properly so called.

It was exactly such a day, the wind gentle but plaintive, the sky overcast, a smoky appearance in the atmosphere, while the sun resembled an immense red wafer stuck in the sky. As I had not been on the other side of the river for some time I determined to pay it a visit, as it had been undisturbed by the accession to my settlement. Taking the canoe, I paddled across the pool, leaving it there for my return.

I struck out a new route, and soon got through the heavily-timbered land that margined the stream ; then ascended some very gradual slopes, and ultimately came on a large opening which undoubtedly had been caused by a forest fire, for it was still covered with innumerable ram-pikes, the leafless, limbless remains of pine trees, which impart to the landscape, of all things I am aware of, the most dismal appearance. The overgrowth of brush, which usually in such situations is dense, was here rather sparse, while grass in many places grew thick, close, short, and abundant. A thorough solitude reigned over the entire waste, imparting to it a ghost-like stillness. Such surroundings are always food for thought, but generally of a very dismal kind, and the gloomy depressing atmosphere was not calculated to dispel them. I had almost made up my mind to retire and leave the place to the evil spirit that apparently had it in its keeping, when I heard the crashing of branches not over a hundred yards off. "There goes or comes," thought I, "the gnome of this retreat," determined either to give me a wide berth, or to dispute my right of intrusion.

Instead of carrying out my intentions of bolting, with the obstinacy peculiar to my race, I sat down on a fallen log, hoping at all events to have my

curiosity gratified. Again and again came the noise of the crashing and breaking of boughs, ultimately followed by the grunt of a bull-moose. As the sound told that the animal was going from me, I followed it, still keeping in the open, and at length had the satisfaction to see a splendid fellow, carrying a magnificent head of horns, and black almost as night in his coat, walk into the clear ground about a hundred and fifty yards to my front. From the course he was taking I knew he must soon wind me, so I got upon a log to watch his movements. His manner was that of a bully spoiling for a fight, for he shook his head defiantly as if challenging or about to make a pass at an imaginary foe, stopping every few paces to gaze around, as if desirous of meeting or discovering something worthy on which to blood his virgin stiletto-pointed tines.

At length the moose caught my wind, in a few moments afterwards his eye detected me; for some minutes he stood as if considering the propriety of giving me battle; but after-thought gained the mastery, and the braggart trotted off, doubtless resolving to make up for his disappointment by punishing with additional severity the next of his own sex and race he encountered.

The day was destined to be productive of infor-

mation, for the moose had scarcely left my sight, when from the elevated position which I still retained, I observed close to me a movement among a small clump of briers and hazel; in a few seconds afterwards a Canadian lynx, better known here by the name of peshoo, bounded past, retraced his steps, and continued to hunt backwards and forwards, as if endeavouring to pick up a scent which it had lost. Soon after it was joined by a companion, and the pair doubled and quartered the ground over and over again. At length they flushed a pack of spruce-grouse, out of whose numbers I have little doubt they each secured a victim.

The Canadian lynx must not be confused with the bay lynx or lucifee, for although both are carnivorous, they are totally different animals. The former resembles the old world lynx; the latter, if it were not for its abbreviated tail, is very like the European wild-cat, and from this resemblance doubtless owes the name of wild-cat, by which it is universally known to the settlers:

The peshoo, although standing twenty inches at the shoulder, is a timid creature, confining its depredations to hares, grouse, squirrels, and such small game. It possesses a beautiful soft fawn-coloured coat, large tufts at the extremity of its ears, a small

but vicious-looking head, a slim body, with upright, powerful, heavy limbs, terminated by extremely large cushioned feet. With the exception of the hunting-leopard, I very much doubt if there is an animal in existence so swift in making three or four successive bounds upon its prey.

Doubtless it would attack man, if cornered, and unable to escape otherwise, yet it is really very shy, and is so fragile in construction that a sharp blow across the loins is almost certain to break its back.

From their keen sense of hearing and acute powers of scent, although far from scarce, they are not often seen. Report says they are most affectionate parents; doubtless these latter good qualities, and their scrupulous cleanliness of coat, have endeared them to me, for as special favourites I regard them.

Their progeny, from personal experience, I cannot say much in favour of. Possibly the two I possessed were too old before capture; but more spiteful, relentless, unforgiving fiends I never previously met, and worst of all they persistently refused to take food, so died, giving me all my labour, coaxing, and anxiety for nothing. However, I have heard, in fact know, that such is not always the result, and that when once they are reconciled to captivity, they become much



attached to their owner, and almost rival a dog in sagacity, but one weakness they are never able to overcome, viz., being death upon poultry.

I let the lynxes gang their gait, and happy in having the pleasure of making their acquaintance, I pursued my way homewards.

Cariboo I found was there. On his way across the portage, he had killed a deer, which already had been packed into camp, and large portions of it sputtered over the camp-fire, a whiff of its odour giving me quite an appetite. In addition to the venison he had added to our larder a brace of remarkably fine beavers. So for supper we enjoyed that delicacy of the Western Indian country—beaver-tails stewed with a little pork, the gravy being thickened with flour. The result was a most delicious dish. At our evening meal Cariboo informed me that he has discovered a couple of dams up the tributary that flows into the river above the shanty, and that in both are plenty of inhabitants. So, desiring to learn more of the habits of these interesting rodents, we have arranged to visit the place together if the weather be propitious in the morning.

There are beautiful and superbly beautiful sun-rises, this was the latter. The course of the river was free, a very rare occurrence before nine o'clock,

of the drapery of mist that gauze-like floats over its surface, and the foliage from a few sharp night-frosts was truly magnificent. Not so *prononcé* as it will be later in the season, but so soft and blended as to cause it to look ærial. A sight of one such morning in these woodland solitudes is worth a year of travel; an ample reward for all the discomforts and inconvenience of dwelling beyond civilisation.

The dense woodland, where the giant pine, erect hemlock, and twisted cedar struggle with each other for the occupation of every inch of soil, is not the place to see the soft tintings of autumn, for these lords of the forest are ever clothed in their dark sombre drapery of harsh green, but along the bed of the river, or on the edge of the barrens, where the hardwoods have succeeded in establishing a settlement, out comes the glory of colouring, which I could almost credit to the brush of fairies.

Proceeding directly south, we did not rest till the barren was gained; here, from the country being open, the frost appeared to have taken more effect, the maples, birches, and mountain-ash foliage having become either a bright straw colour, or a soft brown, while the sumach, oak, and whortleberry are tipped with scarlet, and the larch with gold; the asters and golden-rods, not having lost their beauty, in no small degree

assist the charming *tout ensemble*. Resting as much for breath—for Master Cariboo always obliges me to outpace myself to keep up with him—as to admire the charms that surrounded me, I observed large flights of plover, hovering in their ever-changing fantastic figures. The want of small shot prevented my endeavouring to get within range of these lovely birds.

Through a swamp, almost impassable, and over a ridge steep and rugged as the sides of Ben Arthur, brought us to a lovely little sequestered valley, through the centre of which flowed a calm, clear rivulet. Half a mile above where we struck its margin, the stream spread out into a miniature lake, this expansion of water being caused by a dam whose construction would doubtless be attributed to beavers, by those who wish to believe in the animal's engineering abilities, but to my eye simply the result of a block produced by the superabundance of *débris* washed down in the spring freshets. At the first glance five beaver-houses were conspicuous, and, as our approach had been very guarded and upwind, two of their inhabitants were seen slowly swimming about, one with a bough in its mouth upwards of a yard long. As this creature was within easy shot, I fired; in a moment the water boiled around it from the energy of its dying struggle,

and ere the smoke from my gun had drifted away life had become extinct. But the report had made a strange and startling alteration in the previous solitude, for every bunch of rushes, every yard of swamp seemed to have sent forth a messenger, for duck after duck, in hundreds, kept rising as far up the course of the stream as I could see, each calling in their sharp, harsh note, as if warning others of the intruder's vicinity, or expressing regret that their morning slumbers should so ruthlessly be disturbed. But, leaving the broad-bills to take care of themselves, after following the course of the stream a few yards, my attendant came to one of his traps, and in it was a prize; further up, at the second dam, he had the same luck, thus securing as a return for our labour three beavers. Some years back, when hats were made from the pelt of this animal, in a pecuniary sense such fortune would have been deemed a great stroke of luck: but, from incessant persecution at that period, they were much scarcer than at the present date. Change of fashions, or man's ingenuity in discovering a substitute in silk, out of which to fabricate our head-gear, the beaver family should truly be thankful for. Where the margin of the stream became rocky, the ferns, mosses, and seedlings of various trees were tramped

down by the constant passage of these aquatic animals to and from their favourite haunts, and partially or entirely barked limbs of osier, willow, and birch strewn the ground on every side.

The mode of trapping beaver is not understood by all. A few words on the subject might be acceptable.

The trap is not placed upon land, but submerged in the brook or lake near a place that shows evidence of its frequently being used for landing when the game is about to proceed inland in search of food. Thus, according to depth of water, the trap may be sunk from a few inches to a couple of feet, and over it, attached by a string, floats a piece of chewed or pounded osier smeared over with castoreum. This substance, which is of a greasy nature and orange colour, is obtained from two sacs situated at the root of the animal's tail. The smell that it produces seems to have the same effect on beavers as valerian on cats, for immediately it is scented the otherwise wary quadruped plays round about it, the result being that one or other of its legs is certain to get caught. But the beaver is not ignorant apparently of what trouble is in store for him when discovered by the hunter, so frequently gnaws off its foot to obtain release.

One such lesson as this would be supposed to make a lasting impression, and that castoreum would in future be carefully given a wide berth; but "once caught, twice shy" is not here applicable, for it is no uncommon circumstance to secure a captive who a day or two previously had amputated one of his own members.

The beaver-house externally is a very rough affair, internally it is wondrously snug and scrupulously clean, there being a large wide passage, in which the animal shakes itself previously to entering the dormitory.

Independent of the dwelling erected by their ingenuity, each family of beavers has another sanctum, which, however, I think is rarely used, except in cases of great danger; this is a subterraneous passage, the entrance to which is under water, and running up inland sometimes as much as thirty feet.

Among other qualities as well as ingenuity, this interesting rodent does not live from hand to mouth, but lays up a stock of edibles for winter use; this generally consists of short sticks of poplar and cedar, which are submerged in the mud, frequently several feet beneath the surface of the water, their depth preventing them becoming frozen, and therefore remain always fit for use even in the severity of a northern winter.

## CHAPTER III.

WHILE I was searching about, amusing myself investigating anything that struck my fancy, my companion left me to visit a mink-trap. He had not been absent above twenty minutes, when the sharp report of his gun reverberated from tree and hillside. I felt convinced that it was large game, for Cariboo was too careful of his ammunition to expend it on aught else, unless told to do so; so, picking up my gun, I rushed off to join in the sport, if any was to be had. I had nearly gained the place where I had noted the puff of smoke hang—very much out of breath with my unwonted exertion—when I almost ran against a three-quarter-grown bear. Which was most astonished I could not say, but Bruin recovered his presence of mind first, for before I got my double-barrel to my shoulder he was out of sight in the bush of swamp-alder which here was unfortunately very dense.



I raised my voice and shouted. A whistle answered me. This I knew was expressive of a desire for me to be silent, and to say that other game was close. However, I stealthily wound my way from where it came, and ultimately detected the fur cap of my associate over the edge of a giant windfall. From the steady, unmoving position of his head, I took warning, and, therefore, instead of advancing, as heretofore, crawled upon all fours to his side.

However, not a word could I get from him ; when I whispered, a pantomimic movement of the hand entreated me to silence. Once I attempted to raise myself, but gently I was pressed down. At length I was on the edge of mutiny and about to say some naughty words, when Cariboo dashed down his cap and gave vent to his wrath by uttering two or three expressions scarcely suitable to insert for the reader's edification ; then he continued, "The terriblest, biggest bear I most ever seed ; but he gone now ; he know too much."

On further inquiry, I found that he had come across a young cariboo, which he had killed ; but while in the act of reloading, discovered this venerable bear hanging about, doubtless with an eye to venison, the youngster I came across being unquestionably one of the old vixen's hopeful progeny. After some

trouble, we got our trophy suspended, which was scarcely more than half grown, and had a tremendous open wound across the ham of the left leg. Bruin doubtless was the culprit to whom the laceration should be attributed.

I feel convinced that a fair shot, with ordinary perseverance, could at this season of the year shoot three or four bears weekly. In whatever direction you choose to go evidence of their presence is conspicuously thrust before you, especially where whortleberries and raspberries grow; in fact, in many places square yards of surface among such bushes are bare or covered with leaves and broken limbs, as if the devourers, not satisfied with gratifying their appetites, endeavoured to do as much damage as possible. A sharp quick tramp of an hour and a half brought us so close to home that I could hear the click, click of Sugar's axe as he cut away at the wood-pile, in order to have a necessary supply of fuel ready on the hunters' return. This was the lad's invariable practice; for afterwards, if we had anything to narrate, any adventure to discuss, nothing could have got the boy beyond ear-shot. So thorough was he a hunter at heart, that next to actually being engaged in the chase, his greatest pleasure in life was to hear it spoken of.

I have often watched this child's usually stolid

features become quite animated, his hands clutch each other, and his long half-closed eyes dilate, when a rencontre with a bear or the chase of a buffalo was described; and sometimes when a hair-breadth escape was on the tapis, it would become such a magnet of attraction to him that almost unconsciously he would draw closer and closer to the speaker's side, as if eager to devour the words before uttered.

There is scarcely a sport I know of that affords me more pleasure than moose calling, the only objection I can urge against it being that I am compelled to take a companion with me; for although I can make one or two of the required notes fairly, I am still very far from an accomplished caller. Thus the pleasure to be enjoyed from the solitude of the barren, the repose that rests upon the lonely forest lake, or the sombre shade of the mammoth trees, is much diminished. Sugar, although scarcely fifteen years of age, with that extraordinary power of imitation which nearly all Indians possess, is fairly successful; but Cariboo I believe to be without an equal in the science of moose calling. Indeed, very few white hunters ever attain sufficient excellence to deceive so cautious an animal, and one possessed of such an exquisite sense of hearing as this giant monarch of the woods, more especially if it is late in

the season, or when the neighbourhood has been disturbed by sportsmen.

Another advantage attached to shooting moose by this method is that the animals are in prime condition, their horns have reached maturity, and the velvet-like coating which lately covered them has disappeared, the tines and palmation looking smooth, fresh, and ready to do execution upon any foe that disputes his prowess, or interferes with his love affairs.

Moreover, the bracing fresh frosty air of a September evening so pulls you together that the tramp to your scene of operations is most enjoyable; not sufficiently cold to counteract the excitement of hearing the gallant quarry advance within range, although you may be lying full length upon the bare soil, or doubled up in a rocky recess.

For some days I had discussed the propriety of making my season's *début*—for my Indians report having already heard moose calling, an indication that the time had come when the aid of the birch-bark horn could successfully be employed—so on the evening of the 17th of September, all arrangements, such as the casting of bullets, cleaning guns, were made, that an early start might be effected on the following morning.

It scarcely appeared as if I had been in bed over a few hours when I was awoke by Sugar and Cariboo lighting the fire, in order to warm some soup, so that we should not start on an empty stomach. If we had been near civilisation coffee would doubtlessly have been selected for this purpose; but let me assure all that a greater mistake the hunter cannot be guilty of, if it be at all possible to obtain the former. The only disadvantage exists in the length of time it takes to make; but then, if this is attended to the previous day, when wanted for use no more delay and attention is requisite than would be required to boil water.

On tumbling out of my bunk and sticking my head through our primitive door, I found that fortune had truly favoured us; for scarcely a breath of wind moved the leaves, and although there was a slight mist, still there was a very clear starlight. Cariboo noted the expression on my face, and smiling, said: "First-class morning for moose, Cap; guess we have plenty meat before night;" and I felt convinced his prophecy would come true.

Unhampered with baggage of any description, save and except our guns and ammunition, we left the shanty about three, followed up the course of the river for half a mile, then struck off at right-angles

through the timber land till the barrens were reached, along the edge of which we proceeded till the waters of a solitary and not very picturesque pond were in view. During all this tramp scarcely a word was interchanged between my companion and self, Cariboo leading the way at his usual quick but silent pace. We had barely halted when moose were heard upon a brow of woodland about a mile distant, so without delay we sought and immediately found an admirable hiding-place among some granite boulders covered with rhodora, now bright pink in colour from the effects of the late frosts. For some minutes my associate appeared engaged in thought; again and again he placed the horn to his mouth and removed it, as if uncertain of his powers to accomplish what he desired. At length the strange plaintive note, one unlike any other sound I know, echoed over the landscape. After a pause of nearly half an hour it was repeated, and to our gratification received a response; again, after some delay, the call was sounded, and the answer received came from an animal close at hand, so close that it startled both of us. Cariboo motioned me to get ready; no need of that, for I was so. A tearing of briers and the breaking of bushes now became distinctly audible scarcely fifty yards to my left; in an instant my eye was directed to the sound, and looming larger than

an ox appeared the moose coming straight for us at a slashing trot. In a moment my gun sprung to my shoulder, in rapid succession both barrels were fired into the creature's breast, when staggering forward he fell with his head bent under him.

Our quarry, on inspection, proved to be a very large, but not well-fed animal. Judging from the narrowness and length, as well as thinness of the palmation of the antlers, he must have been extremely old. So great had been the force of his fall, that the tines of the left horn were completely buried in the hard soil.

At the proposal of the Indian, we shifted our position to the back of a log nearly half a mile from where we had been previously secreted; this we had abundant facilities to do unobserved, for day had not yet broken. Where we now were was more open, yet not nearly so much to my liking; but I made no comment, for I always make it a rule to leave such matters to the Indians, who on kindred subjects are much better qualified to form an opinion than myself.

This time, without hesitation, the Red-skin sounded his note. In little over a few minutes an answer was returned, followed by the distinct sound of broken boughs, evidently caused by the monarch of the woods brushing his horns against the dry or dead timber.



that surrounded him. Again another note issued from the call; this time the grunt of recognition was closer, but, from the lapse of time that had occurred, it was evident the creature was in no great hurry to come up, or suspicious that all was not correct. Cariboo now placed his horn close to the ground, and uttered a long, plaintive note. This had the effect of bringing the game closer, but several after efforts failed to make him leave the shelter of some dead ram-pikes a couple of hundred yards to the right, on whose sides he rattled his antlers as if venting on them wrath at the disappointment he had experienced in not finding a mate.

“He very old fox, but I more old fox,” said my attendant, concluding, in a whisper, “You wait here; I soon get you shot.” And from my side he glided away like a snake; in fact, so silent was his retreat that I could scarcely realise that he had left me. For over a quarter of an hour I remained wondering what was to occur next, the only sound audible being an occasional crash among the dead timber. At length a plaintive note came from my left, to which the bull grunted a response, and I could tell, from its distinctness, he was making for it, which plan, if followed out, would bring him past my stand. Again all was still, when a second note, very low and very soft, received another grunt in answer, the dis-

tinctness of which assured me that the deer was much closer. The faintest tinge of light indicated break of day, and distant objects were becoming more clearly defined. Earnestly I fixed my eyes on where my ear told me the last sound had proceeded. At length, among some brush, I detected a movement; soon after made out the outline of the moose, but so well was he sheltered that I declined firing, as quite eighty yards intervened between us. Fortunately, my patience was not long tried. In response to another note from Cariboo's horn, the creature stepped into the open, and I fired. At the first shot the animal reared and lunged forward. Quick as thought I gave him the second barrel. I knew I had not missed, but feared the ball was badly placed; for in an instant afterwards, at a slashing trot, the moose dashed past me. Cariboo I had almost ceased to think of, but the sharp report of his gun brought the game headlong to the ground, for in its course it had approached his retreat. It was a splendid shot, and well worthy of being recorded.

This moose was young, and in magnificent condition, but had one of the brow points broken off the antlers close to the base. Cariboo, pointing this out, said, "That why he coward, frightened to come up; he expect more beating from ole bull."

Our success, the glorious sunrise, the bracing walk

home, made us both in the best of humours. Every incident of the two battles were fought over again, and the praises I gave the faithful fellow for his out-manceuvring the last bull fell on his ear like rain on parched land.

Of the audacity of the moose, I quote the following from the notes of Captain Hardy, R.A., one of the best of sportsmen, and most reliable of authorities on this subject:

“A sportsman, accompanied by an Indian, was moose-calling on Mosher’s River, Nova Scotia, one morning in the autumn of 1867. They were on a barren, and near the margin of a heavy forest. A fine bull-moose came up to the call, and fell to the Indian’s gun, when instantly another bull emerged from the woods, and charged at the prostrate animal. A second bullet brought him over, and he fell on the body of what had probably been his foe of the season.

“A settler in the backwoods, going out one October evening to chop firewood near his shanty in the forest, heard a bull-moose ‘handy.’ He returned for his gun, and, after a short stalk in the bushes, obtained a shot at the moose, an animal with superb antlers, and could distinctly see he had hit him in the neck. There he stood for a considerable time, while the settler, who had only the one charge, lay in the

bushes; at length the beast turned and leisurely walked away. The man was up betimes next morning, and away to the same spot. He saw blood, and, following the trail for a short distance, heard sounds indicating the presence of moose. Having some faint idea of calling, he put a piece of bark to his mouth, and gave the note of the bull. Answering at once, a fine moose came in view, when he fired, and this time prostrated the animal, the identical one shot the evening before. He recognised the horns, and the wound in its neck.

“Apropos of this subject, the following extracts from his note-book, kindly placed at my disposal by ‘The Old Hunter,’ are highly interesting and illustrative. He says:

“‘I left my camp on Lake Mooin (the lake of the bear), Liscomb River, September, 1866, in company with Peter, Joe, and Stephen as my Indian hunters, intending to cross the next lake to the southward in a canoe which we had there secreted. On arriving at the lake, we found the wind so high that it was considered altogether unsafe to trust ourselves on its waters in our frail barque. About five o’clock the wind moderated, but, as I still thought that we could not reach my old calling-ground on the opposite side before the decline of the sun, I determined to cross

to a narrow neck of barren, distant from us by water about seven hundred yards. After various perils, we reached the spot, disembarked among the rocks, fixed a place for the calling-ground should the night be calm, collected our bedding of spruce-boughs picked in a neighbouring swamp, and, releasing our blankets from their cordings, prepared for supper. Suddenly all was still; the wind had gone down, and the western sky was tinged with the gorgeous colouring denoting a moose-caller's delight—a calm, serene night. All at once a cracking of wood was heard away down on our side of the lake, and presently more noises, plainly telling the presence of moose thereabouts. A few minutes of hesitation, and I induced Peter to sound the loved note from aloft; and not long after he descried a moose at fully a mile's distance, coming to the end of the forest. The margin of the lake on our side had been burnt, and was barren of bush or tree, except in a few places. Several persuasive calls induced the moose to show himself upon the barren, however only to return to the cover of the green woods, a fact, we all knew, proving him to be either a coward or a beaten deer. We coaxed; he still came on, showing himself occasionally on the barren, though never answering, and at length was espied about three hundred yards off, peering around him,

and listening, his huge ears extended forwards to the utmost. We thought that he saw us, but he had cunning folks to deal with. We did not move or call. Down he came, making directly for us, now speaking for the first time. I was lying directly in his route, and, when distant about fifteen yards, I bowled over one of the finest and most cautious of his species I had ever met with. He was cast and butchered before the twilight faded.

“ ‘ We supped, and that night lay replete ; but my sleep not being of such a dead nature as that of my faithful followers, the crashing of trees and the bellying of moose emanating from the same direction as that whence came the fallen monarch, struck frequently on my ear. At cock-crow I woke up the sleeping aborigines. And, severe as had been the cold of the past night, we listened long and with intense interest to the distant sounds, not the usual sound of the cow-moose at this season, but a sort of unearthly roaring.

“ ‘ We called, and presently observed two moose leave the woods, and approach us on the barrens. When about five hundred yards distant from us we lost sight of them in the alder bushes which grew thickly on the banks of a small brook flowing into the lake. Past this spot they would not come : we



did not advance, so we determined to kill no more moose on that occasion. Our object was simply to watch. I particularly wanted to ascertain from which animal the snorting and fierce bellowing came. We had perceived that they were male and female. They stopped in the alders for about fifteen minutes or so, making a great row, breaking sticks and pawing the water in swamp-holes with a loud splashing. At length we espied them beating a slow retreat on the route they had advanced upon, and I determined to take the canoe and follow them by water, leaving Stephen to prepare breakfast. The morning was perfectly calm, fog here and there rising from the lake and along the lines of the numerous brooks that emptied into it. I may here add that though I have named it Lake Merganser, owing to the numbers of those birds frequenting it, it would have been fully entitled to have been called Rocky Lake, as I think that both below and above its surface, rocks abound to a greater extent than in any other sheet of water in Nova Scotia, and that is saying a good deal.

“ ‘ Stealing over the lake’s surface, and seated in the bottom of our canoe, we could not well scan the woods along the margin, for the rocks on the shore were fully eight feet high. However, at length we sighted two large black objects ascending a hill.



Peter called like a bull, and this at once arrested them. They turned, and one, for a moment lost to sight, appeared on the edge of the barren. Another step and he must have descended. It was a mighty bull-moose; he peered at us, and was motionless, while we with restrained breath, gazed upon him. After standing in that position for some minutes, he turned and looked towards where we had slept. I did the same, and could plainly see the boy Stephen perched upon the rock beneath which we had lain. Then he walked five or six steps, turned, and gave us a full side view, twice picking some twigs from the bushes, which we could hear him munching with his teeth, so close were we. During this wondrous sight a loud noise was made in the bush three times, when out walked a cow-moose. She, like her lord, looked hard at us, and I thought was 'for off.' Not a bit; she stopped for fully five minutes, then turned and faced the hill, emitting several times the angry grunt so dreaded by the Indian as a sign of ill-luck. The bull quietly took his departure, and we watched them enter the forest. This bull had only one horn. Peter declared that the other was a small stump—a malformation—but I shall ever be of opinion that he had lost it in battle, for on our return to our rocky home, and when butcher-

ing the dead moose, we found that he had been in the wars, and was much bruised about the neck and ribs on the near side.

“ ‘ Parting with this most interesting couple, we paddled on to the foot of the lake, and called a few times at the head of a bog. We were quickly answered, and up came a rattling moose. He was astonished at seeing us, I feel certain, and was for bolting, but continued walking along the dry edge of the bog. Peter imitated a bull’s note, at which he turned fiercely round with mane, rump-hair, and ears erect, and answered angrily. This was repeated fully six times to our great amusement, at length he walked away, making constant ‘bockings,’ and rubbing his antlers against the burnt trees.

“ ‘ All at once we espied another pair of moose coming from the opposite direction—a bull and a cow—and expected to see a meeting, perhaps a combat; but although there appeared every likelihood of such an occurrence, it was avoided by the pair retreating into the deep woods. The bulls ceasing to answer each other, we paddled back to camp, where little Stephen, though he had observed all the first part of the spectacle from the rock, had not neglected to provide for his ‘*sacamow*’ and comrade Red-skin a sumptuous repast of kidneys, steak, and coffee.

“ ‘ I am a firm believer, and always was, that it is the cow-moose that makes the noise, by some called a roar, and I was thus a witness to the fact. Here was a glorious morning’s work without bloodshed ! Alas ! last season upwards of fifty moose were killed about Lake Merganser. It is a fact that now not a track can there be seen.’ ”

But to resume my narrative.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN we reached home, Sugar was in a great state of excitement. Scarcely had we disappeared in the morning before he heard a noise at the smoke-house. Picking up Cariboo's old single barrel, which was discarded as long as I permitted him to use my spare gun, the boy rushed out to learn the reason, when he discovered a bear on the summit of the hollow trunk, trying to pull the logs and things off the top that had been placed there for the double purpose of keeping in the smoke and out intruders. No way alarmed, the youngster cocked the gun, but it would not go off, although he made repeated efforts, almost touching the bear on one occasion with his muzzle. However, this plucky conduct was sufficient to alarm Bruin, who immediately beat a retreat.

This animal seems to be one of the most knowing scoundrels that it is possible to imagine, for he is

ever giving evidence of his being in the neighbourhood by attempting to force his way into my store-room, invariably doing so when no one is at home. I have made sundry bower-houses over which I have exercised all my ingenuity. I have covered the trap in it with the most natural looking leaves and grasses, and supplied a variety of new and most enticing baits, still Mr. Bruin fights shy and refuses to be victimised. Even Cariboo has had a trial with no better success than myself, and when speaking of the bear says, "That old man be the devil;" if he were, he could not possess more artfulness.

The cunning of these animals is sometimes extraordinary. I heard of a settler's farm-yard being haunted by one of these canny beasts, scarcely a week passing without it making an appearance and committing ruinous depredations, but never doing so when the good man was at home. In fact it almost appeared as if the marauder watched the clearing till the head of the house left for market or for his usual avocation in the woods, when Bruin would fearlessly present himself to the women and children, who quite commenced to regard him as a haunting evil genius. But his day of reckoning came at last; the homestead ran short of provisions, the children commenced to look gaunt and thin, for the pigs that were to have

supplied the little household with pork had all been killed by the bear, so the old woman got savage, as the Americans say, her dander was riz, when she saw the cause of their troubles curveting around as if owner of the premises. So she took down the old gun from above the fireplace, which never was without a load in it, and slipping to the door, took aim over a stump, and pulled the trigger, dropping the weapon immediately after the explosion, and rushing into the house locked the door, never for a moment stopping to learn the result of her courage. Till Paterfamilias returned at night, no one crossed that threshold, for the mother doubtless thought that the black-coated savage was lurking near to take a deadly revenge upon the first of his assailant's offspring that should offer.

At length the familiar voice of the head of the family was heard. Soon the incident was narrated to him, a search was instituted, and Bruin was found dead within a few paces where he had received his death wound.

This anecdote I state in nearly the words imparted to me, and I thoroughly believe it, for the cunning of bears is proverbial; so this creature doubtless remained under the friendly shelter of the woods till it heard the monotonous click of the husbandman's

axe, which told that the only one of the establishment, whose acquaintance he did not wish to make, was engaged in his daily occupation of chopping, so sallied forth. It is a notorious fact that if a bear has his haunt in the vicinity of a settlement, he will be seen frequently by the women and children, although the hunter's search for the unwelcome visitor may be fruitless for months.

Now this bear that so frequently visited my shanty was doubtless one of those cunning vagabonds who knew as well what a bear trap was as I did myself, so I commenced to believe my prospect of capturing him very slight indeed, and for several days did not visit where it was set. At length, when I did so, I found it sprung and the bait gone.

This gave me renewed hope, so I not only reset it, but went home to procure another to place in the immediate vicinity of the first. Our larder being rather low in its supply of fresh food, I took Skye with me in the hope that he would flush some grouse during the tramp.

Soon the second trap was set. Going thus far having killed nothing I started for a ramble to procure the birds. My success was even greater than anticipated, and about sundown I was struggling



nome with a heavy load. When scarcely half a mile from the shanty I missed my little companion. Of course I supposed that he had run on before me, so troubled myself no more about his absence. When I reached my dwelling I inquired if Sugar had seen him, "No, he had not." Still I was not uneasy, for a squirrel or a woodchuck might have attracted his attention; when discovering that I did not join him, he would desist scraping when tired, and not finding me, follow up my trail. Hour after hour passed, and still the dog remained absent. I consequently became uneasy, and several times went into the opening and caused the woods to echo with my shrill whistle, but no Skye answered. Since being ill, I have become more irritable and impatient, so fretted and conjured up all kinds of probable mishaps to my pet. First, I saw a wild-cat spring from a branch upon his back and ultimately strangle him; next, he had come across that luckless bear, which in his fearlessness he had approached too closely, when he had been seized and torn into pieces.

I sat awake all that night, hoping every moment I should hear his familiar scratch upon the door; but, alas! I was doomed to be disappointed. Again and again I went out and whistled, and the only response was the voice of the owls jeering me. Birds of ill

omen I knew they were considered, and their harsh maniacal shrieks I construed into a warning of coming misfortune.

Those who are acquainted with dogs know how attached a person can become to them. Skye was a most affectionate, gentle little creature when at home, fond of being noticed and caressed, yet without a particle of cringing disposition, and he was almost as intelligent as a human being. Anything within dog's comprehension he learned at once, for he seemed but to live to do his master's bidding; and with all the above good qualities possessed such courage as feared nothing.

The night ultimately gave way to day, but tardily it did it. After my morning cup of soup, Sugar and self started to search the ground I had passed yesterday. The traps of course were visited, and in one of them was my poor pet—dead. I was so overcome that I could see nothing; for I am not ashamed to say that tears coursed down my cheeks, as I released the corpse of my favourite from the cruel teeth that had deprived him of life. Nor was Sugar less moved; he wrung his hands and sat down upon the earth hard by, looking the picture of despair. At length I deposited the body in the boy's arms, and we were about to start for home, when I discovered that the

other trap was gone, the heavy limb to which its chain was attached leaving a long furrow to show the direction in which it had been dragged, and to tell how powerful was the animal on which it had been sprung.

Knowing that the brute the trap was attached to could not go far, my attendant and self returned to the shanty with our precious load truly sad at heart. On my bed I deposited the remains, then selected some fresh ammunition, and with Sugar as henchman, returned to take up the trail and if possible kill Bruin.

The uninitiated may not be aware that a bear trap is never fastened to anything immovable; for if such were the case, the captive would gnaw his foot off to obtain freedom. On the other hand, if he can drag along whatever it is secured to, he will not resort to such a cannibal device.

The pole to which I had attached the chain on this occasion could not weigh less than one hundred pounds, and must have been eleven or twelve feet in length; but for all that more than two miles we followed its track through brush, swamp, and woodland, Sugar leading the way, not because he was a better tracker, for any one could have made out a trail so apparent, but because his eyes were keener, and,

consequently, he would detect the presence of the enemy sooner than I should; for if not cautious we might possibly run upon the brute, so as to be at close quarters with him before we were aware, and fight under such circumstances he was certain to, from the ruffling his temper had received from his movements being impeded by such a painful attachment.

I felt convinced from the commencement, from the route Bruin had selected, that he was endeavouring to make his way to some caves on the edge of the river, probably the place where he had slept through the inclement weather of last winter; but to reach these must of necessity take some time, for constantly we observed places where the pole had jammed, such being apparent from the bark being rubbed off saplings frequently feet apart; and, of course, when such occurred, the ultimately outwitted marauder must have halted to disengage the remorseless anchor.

I have heard, and I believe its truth, that a bear will frequently, when trapped, take the pole in his mouth and carry it, so as to prevent his escape being checked, or the teeth of the trap caused to further lacerate the flesh of the part on which it is fastened.

We had almost gained the margin of the river,

at a place where the trees were less numerous, and the brush thinner than was generally the case, when Sugar gently glided behind me, and pointed to the bear, who had turned back on becoming cognisant of our approach, an indication that he was determined to give us battle. I had only time to say to the boy "Have the other gun ready," when offensive action became unavoidable; for Bruin was advancing rapidly upon me, although dreadfully hampered by the stick that dragged behind him. No craven was this animal, it could be seen at a glance, for his black lips curled up, exhibiting a most useful, but still disagreeable set of teeth, while the small eyes expressed excess of rage. Somehow or other—possibly it resulted from nervousness—my first barrel exploded before I had obtained a satisfactory aim; still it smashed the left thigh. But this warning did not intimidate my foe, for, crippled and manacled as he was, he charged upon three legs. My second shot caught him at the back of the head, and passing into him longitudinally, for a moment caused him to stagger, so that I fully concluded he was about to fall, when, with a convulsive effort, he rallied himself, but the delay had enabled me to change guns. Up almost perpendicular rose the bear; all his energy seemed to be concentrated in a last grand rush, but the movement

exposed his breast, and the third shot deprived him of life.

My prize was a magnificent animal, for he was not only in perfect condition, but possessed a splendid coat, and, although judging of dead weight in such an instance is very probable to be erroneous, I should think must have weighed close on five hundred pounds.

How the dog could have got into one trap and the bear into the other was long to me a matter of wonder, but the elucidation that appears the most probable is that Skye struck the bear's trail, overtook him nosing about the bait, and then attacked him.

This put Bruin on his metal, and caused him to forget his habitual caution, so trod upon the trap; at the same time my favourite, unsuspecting of danger, while keeping up the war had the misfortune to get into the other.

On reaching home, I found Cariboo, the old chief, and Saucy waiting for me. All commiserated with me on my loss, for the Indians, although generally very cruel to their own dogs, had taken a great liking to my pet. While we were shooting together, I remember the old chief saying to me one day in his broken lingo, when Skye had done something to attract his

attention, "White man's dog know far more than Indian dog, all the same as white man know more than Indian."

In the morning, on the sunniest part of a bank that overlooked the river, close to the birch-tree under which we usually drew up our canoe, I ordered Sugar to dig a grave, I taking upon myself to hew out a coffin from a log. Saucy saw my proceedings, but said nothing. Soon after I had commenced work, she disappeared into the woods. I thought that she had departed for home, although it was unusual for her to do so without saying good-bye. At noon, however, she returned with several rolls of birch bark. This did not attract my attention particularly, for the squaws are ever making something out of it, birch bark being to Indian women what Manchester goods are to English; but when I returned from fishing at sunset I learned the reason of her temporary desertion, for the bark she had sewn into a tiny coffin, and placed on my bunk with the faithful little companion of my travels in it. With feelings of gratitude deeper than I could express—for here was an attention as delicate as it was touching, one well worthy to have emanated in the bosom of the daughters of civilisation—I turned round to thank her. She was not upon her customary seat



in the corner as I expected, it being occupied by her father, sucking, with loud expressive puffs of satisfaction, his favourite pipe. So I asked what had become of her. The old chief said nothing, did not even raise his eyes from the glowing bowl; but Cariboo answered, "She have gone home to camp long since."

After a moment's thought, I was glad that it was so, for, in spite of her ragged clothes and copper-coloured skin, I feel convinced I should have thrown my arms around her, and—kissed her.

No one was invited to the funeral, still all that spent that night within my shanty came. Skye was deposited a good three feet beneath the soil, and not a word was spoken while the ceremony was performed, and seldom could an assemblage of sadder faces be seen. Even Poteen's countenance had an expression that almost said, "I grieve for my dead comrade."

Next day I planted a birch sapling over the mound, trusting that it may flourish, and in years to come droop its graceful limbs over the last resting-place of a true and noble heart, as if weeping that poor Skye had ever yielded up his generous spirit.

For some days after I was *distract*, so scarcely left the house. The old chief and some of his people

who had come to look after him had returned to their encampment, loaded with bear's-meat, a prize which they most highly valued. Cariboo was also absent trapping, in which he had been meeting with more than ordinary success, so, with the exception of Sugar, I was entirely alone.

Rain had fallen in the morning; not your heavy downfalls, but what in spring would be called a gentle growing shower. By noon it cleared up, so I took my rod and went to the river. I scarcely ever remember to have seen the fish rise more greedily, and all were of such a size that their landing lost me many minutes. One that I had taken, and which was more magnificently marked than any of the others—and so had delayed laying aside, the longer to admire its beauty—was full of spawn, so near maturity that it escaped upon my hand. Previously I had imagined that the spawning season would not commence here for several weeks to come, as is the case further to the south. Temperature of water undoubtedly controls all these matters, and, when such is known to be the case, for the proper protection of breeding fish, the close season in settled countries should be made to suit each individual river.

On my return to the shanty, to my very great sur-

prise, I met Antoine, also Cariboo; from the countenance of the former I knew that he was in anything but an amiable temper. After giving him a kindly welcome, I asked him several questions, but he only answered me in monosyllables, and looked if possible more black and sulky. Behaving as if he was not present, I ate my evening meal, chatting alternately with the Indians; but conversation did not flow fluently, there was a wet blanket hanging over all our proceedings. At length the food was removed, and, after I had lit my pipe, I inquired in loud if not peremptory tone, what was his reason for deserting me so long, how his trade had prospered, and whether he had enough furs to pay me for the powder, lead, and gewgaws I sold him previous to his leaving.

“Pay you!” he exclaimed. “Pay be d——d! that game is played out.”

“Not at all. You shall give me back my property, or their value in furs.”

“What if I won’t—what then?”

“Simply, I’ll make you.”

In a moment he jumped to his feet; an instant after we had hold of each other. As we struggled, my eye caught the flash from the blade of his knife which he was attempting to draw; so I seized his wrist, gave it a jerk, which disarmed him, then hit

him straight from the shoulder, knocking him over the kettle containing the boiling hot remains of our meal, ere he measured his length upon the floor. That he was severely scalded I had not the slightest doubt, but, from the boasts I had heard of his making, "how he had cheated the Englishman, and how he would cut his guts out if he interfered with him," I was resolved to give him a lesson that would not soon escape his memory.

My advice to all is, always avoid a row, but if compelled to fight, do it with a purpose; half-measures on such occasions are perfectly useless.

But to refer to Antoine. After some minutes I picked him up, for he was still insensible or playing 'possum, carried him to the place where the ashes and *débris* from the shanty were deposited, and there dumped him, giving him a parting kick in the ribs to recal his scattered senses.

An hour afterward Sugar had occasion to go out. The hybrid Frenchman was gone.

When the whole scene was over I regretted it taking place, but I felt that I had acted rightly if I desired to uphold my standing in the neighbourhood.

The Indian lads had never seen me lose my temper before; I feel convinced they never wished to witness it again.

As I was turning into my bunk Cariboo said, "I tell you long since Antoine bad man. Now you know he very bad man." The boy echoed his opinion, and in the mouth of a multitude of witnesses there is surely truth.

## CHAPTER V.

*September 24.*—For several days after this scene with Antoine, I was thoroughly upset, for I felt convinced that as now open hostilities had been declared between us, that the war would last indefinitely, and that he would stoop to any step to gain revenge, so that I should be compelled for self-protection to exercise the greatest vigilance. Quarrels such as this are much to be repudiated, for in wild countries, where might is right, they too frequently terminate in bloodshed; and although I should feel justified in taking a fellow-creature's life in defence of my own, still such an action—the sending a human soul to its last account when probably totally unprepared to meet its judge—cannot but for ever after be a source of the deepest regret. Through the Indians, I have heard that, after he left my shanty, he proceeded to the old chief's camp, and vowed by all the saints in

the calendar that my heart's blood alone would satisfy his craving for revenge. The chief's regard for me and dislike to the French-Canadian, induced him at once to espouse my quarrel and order the fellow's immediate departure. To fight against such odds for the present, Antoine unquestionably thought imprudent, so turned his steps northward, doubtless to the residence of the Indians with whom he had been trading—a benefit resulting from the course he had adopted being, that at least for the present the neighbourhood is quit of him.

The weather now is truly delightful, such days and nights of cool breezes, bright suns, blue skies, and mellow moons, as cause regret for the loss of time passed in sleep, and indent their remembrance upon the memory, there to remain till decay has deprived the system of its service. Thus all my time is spent out-doors, and not a moment passes unoccupied, for, turn where you will, gaze aloft, into the forest, across the river, objects of deepest interest and fit subjects for thought and study present themselves. Although I confess to have studied the animal more than the vegetable kingdom, it is not that the former is more wonderful than the latter, but that my taste and sympathies are more appealed to by it, still I love the graceful, waving, ever-changing trees, merry or sad



with the seasons, silent or musical as the winds command. Every tree around my clearing I recognise as a familiar friend; and, although the cruel axe daily culls from their numbers, still it is with regret I see the destruction take place that it is impossible to avoid. And in the fall of these giant children there is something so grand, so heroic, that reminds one of the gallant dead who died in harness and with their faces to the foe.

Although not very abundant in this immediate vicinity, the giant among trees of these latitudes is doubtless the white pine. On firm, dry soil it only grows, and where found in numbers, underbush of no description cumbers the ground, so from the delightful subdued shade it yields, and no impediment to man's feet, except the various and always beautiful ferns that cluster about its roots, its groves form the choicest of camping grounds.

To the east, and throughout more settled districts, the lumberman has long despoiled the forests of their choicest specimens, for unquestionably they are a prize valued far above all compeers, but it is to be hoped that many a year will yet have to come ere this favoured region has its hills, vales, rivers, and lakes insulted by the cruel echo of the woodman's axe. Many specimens of the white pine, as certain

as I possibly can be without having measured them, I have seen a hundred and forty feet long ere a branch was thrown out, while the stem was perfectly straight. As the top of a ridge or the edge of a precipice is a favourite site for this mammoth to select, they thus often form a favourite landmark for both sportsman and lumberman, and the traveller entering a new and unknown region may save himself much trouble, if not actual danger, by noting by compass the bearing such a tree has from his encampment. In magnitude the hemlock ranks next, but, from invariably growing in low, wet land, is seldom seen to advantage; more, its stem at the base is surrounded by innumerable varieties of brush and parasitic plants, all calculated to detract from the appearance of elevation. It also has suffered much at man's hands, for the strong astringent qualities of the bark have induced its adoption for tanning in place of that of the time-honoured oak.

The hemlock appears to be a great favourite with both birds and quadrupeds; the ruffed grouse and Canadian grouse delight in its branches as a roosting place; the woodpeckers, passenger pigeons, cat-birds, and even blue jays love its shade during the noon-day sunlight; while over its mossy damp roots the tracks of the variable hare will be found intersecting;

each other in a perfect labyrinth. While living in Maine, one of these trees grew so close to my residence that the branches touched the window-sill of my bedroom in the top story of the house. This tree ever appeared to have several squirrels secreted in its branches, who, the moment my back was turned, would be into the chamber, and turn everything—papers, fishing-tackle, pipes, &c.—topsy-turvy ; and although these pranks occasionally at first tried my temper, I ultimately reaped a reward, for soon the little mischiefs became so tame that they performed all their vagaries when I was in the room, sometimes of a morning presuming so far as to run over the bed or perch on the top of its canopy. In due time a couple of baby squirrels were brought by their parents and introduced to me ; very timid were these pretty little things at first, but soon familiarity gave them confidence, and in time, I believe, I could have induced them to have eaten out of my hands. This I learned from the experience I am narrating, that squirrels are most affectionate parents, at the same time exact perfect obedience from their offspring. In this hemlock was also the nest of a cedar bird, American representative of the Bohemian chatterer—one of the prettiest of the feathered race and most charming melodists of the western forests. Here was

reared their family, to depart south with the advent of winter, and possibly the next year, if no mishap befel either, to return once more to the old nest in the favourite hemlock-tree.

But there are numerous other coniferous trees in this district beside those I have mentioned: black spruce, white spruce, the silver-fir, and balsam; all equally beautiful, and lavishly doing their duty to give attraction to the landscape. Nor are the hardwoods less worthy of appreciation and admiration; the beech, elm, maple, and birches worthily uphold the fame their *confrères* have gained in Europe—I am not sure, but add to their reputation at this season when they first have changed their foliage to every conceivable variety of brilliant orange, scarlet, or yellow. In the river, several hundred yards beneath the shanty, there is an island nearly an eighth of a mile long, its most elevated portions are rocky, with rich alluvial soil edging upon the stream. Here the dark coniferii form a ridge of emerald green along its centre, while the deciduous trees, gorgeous in orange and scarlet, make a deep fringe around them—an emerald set in the most refulgent of burnished gold—the whole surrounded with the merriest, mischief-loving water, at one time leaping aloft in snow-white spray, at another swinging round

in treacherous whirlpools, or reposing in placid deep blue pools. At the lower end of the island is a shallow of trifling extent ; it is caused by the wash carried down by the current on either side of the island's shores, depositing the *débris* here. As the water is almost stagnant, over its surface has grown a quantity of different descriptions of water plants, the broad-leafed lily being abundantly represented. To those that know the habits of wild-fowl, they will scarcely be surprised to hear that this little retreat is seldom without several, so it is often my pleasure to pop down suddenly upon them. Such visits have their charm at this season, but when the wild-fowl had just hatched their broods, and the little progeny more resembled bunches of fluff and down than animated creatures, to suddenly show myself at this nook was a treat, for no sooner would the vigilant parent bird become aware of the presence of an intruder, than sounding her note of alarm she would dash off for the open river followed by all her youthful brood, who, in their anxiety not to be left behind, half-swimming, half-walking, would struggle first across water-lilies, then force themselves over tangled flags and rushes, under, over, any way to get forward, comical in their haste, ridiculous in their energy, till the open rapids and spray-covered stream was reached, where they would bob about

buoyant as a cork and perfectly indifferent to the rude violence of the surrounding waves.

About ten days had passed since the departure of Antoine, when one evening, as I was carrying in a stock of firewood for the night's consumption, I was surprised to see a canoe slowly toiling up against the current. In it were four Indians, who evidently, from the deep draught that their birch-bark drew, had as much to do as they could accomplish. At first I imagined that they were some of my neighbours, but as soon as they had approached sufficiently close for their features to be distinguished, I saw that they were strangers.

From my having remained still, I had not been observed, so when I hailed them, just as they were abreast of my position, with a start of surprise, each instantly looked towards me, and the heads of two persons, who had not been previously seen, were raised over the gunwale. At a signal of invitation for them to land, the canoe bow was soon pointed for the shore, and in a moment after touched the beach. Hastening forward to give a welcome to the visitors, what was my surprise to see that a white man and woman were among their number. In such a strange meeting, and so thoroughly unexpected, it would be impossible to say who looked the most astonished ;



however, I did not permit my surprise to cause me to forget my hospitality, so gave them a welcome as hearty as sincere. Of course, for them to go further that evening could not be permitted, but a moderate amount of pressure was required to induce them to remain ; this I successfully applied, and soon had the weather-beaten travellers under my roof.

Weather-beaten they were in every sense of the word, and but for their features and some peculiarities of costume, might have been mistaken for Indians.

The lady, in deference to her sex, I will describe first. She was rather over ordinary height, with an inclination to be stout, and, although considerably over forty, had that in her features denoting the past possession of beauty ; but her eye was one of the most expressive I have ever seen, for it appeared to denote every possible quality, vivacity, thought, courage, and intellect. Her costume, which was composed of the commonest material, was made after the Indian pattern, slightly Europeanised, the whole being covered with a cloak made out of a dark-blue blanket.

Grace is inherent in some women, dress them as you will they ever look attractive ; so it was with this lady, and as she walked from the beach to the house, Gibraltar and the gliding señoretas of Andalusia



were recalled to my memory. How often are contrasts seen between man and wife; in this instance it was very marked, for the husband was tall, thin, angular, and awkward, yet there was an air of gentleness, coupled with resolution, that would induce the timid to trust and the bold to respect him; more than his wife, he had adopted the Indian costume; in fact, the only thing in his apparel that denoted his European descent was the white neckcloth, which, although clean, looked as if long unacquainted with starch or smoothing iron.

It is scarcely polite to ask strangers immediately on meeting them who they are and where they come from; but I was not long kept in ignorance. My guests were Germans returning to civilisation after sojourning for twelve years as missionaries among the Indians of the most distant north-west. In all that long period, except what they could learn from the clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company, they had no communion with the outer world. What self-denial, what belief, what faith, does not such conduct as this manifest? and how very few are there among us who, even in the Creator's service, would permit themselves to suffer such banishment; still this worthy couple alluded without regret to the past, and with cheerfulness referred to their return. Both

spoke and read English imperfectly, but quite intelligibly, so we soon were engaged in what to me was a most interesting conversation. No wonder that they were weather-stained and travel-soiled; over two months they had been upon their journey, and I was the first evidence they met that they were approaching civilisation. The descriptions that both gave of the scenery and country they had passed through made me wish that the season was earlier, and my supplies sufficient to have extended my tour into it, for not only were the inhabitants totally unacquainted with white men, but game and fish abounded; however, winter in that lone land, which lasts three-fourths of the year, must be a dreary period indeed, for the weather is frequently so severe that for weeks at a time it is impossible to leave the shelter of your dwelling.

The next day after my visitors' arrival, being Sunday, a circumstance that I was almost unaware of, I succeeded in inducing them to postpone their departure till the morrow. The news of their advent had reached the Indians at the lake, so by sunrise there was quite a levée assembled, and as several understood a little English, the missionary thought it an opportunity not to be lost for a word in season. I fear I was the only one that profited by his zeal, and that was only in a partial manner, for frequently I

could not understand entire sentences from the imperfect manner that he spoke my native language. This, however, did not prevent his audience listening with devout attention, and the grave, serious look of the Indians would have done honour to any congregation. This German was much to be admired, and exactly the type of person that should be selected for the life he led, for he was devout without being fanatical, earnest yet not harsh, an excellent mechanic as well as a scholar. In fact, just such a person as I have imagined our own Livingstone to be, judging from the descriptions I have heard of him on the banks of the Clyde from those who knew him in his early days, and long ere he was so widely known to fame. Over our pipes, for he was a great smoker, and seemed to appreciate the quality of my supply, he narrated to me one adventure that showed that, although by choice a man of peace, he still could be, if emergency demanded, a man of war.

A couple of years after his arrival among the Indians, where he had established his mission, some strange natives came to visit him. His apparently utter defencelessness induced them to form a plan of appropriating his property. An opportunity presented itself to the Red-skins, at least they thought so, by my guest and his wife going out together to

obtain a supply of fish. But before his reverence had been long engaged, an accident happened to his tackle that induced his return home ; to his surprise, on entering the hut, he beheld half a dozen savages preparing his effects for immediate transportation. Detected, the thieves did not disguise what was their intention, and were now prepared to carry it out by force. The good man argued with them, pointed out the heinousness of their conduct, their injustice to himself, who had never robbed them ; but all was vain, and insolence and threats were returned, so as he expressed it, “although a soldier of Christ more forcible means had to be adopted than generally employed by them.” So he seized a club that had been a broom-handle ; his foes, nothing loth, met him, and hard and fast became the fight, his knowledge in fencing serving him good purpose. Early in the scrimmage two got knocked down, but affairs looked still doubtful when the doctor’s wife arrived, and her presence turned the tide of battle into an ignominious hasty retreat.

At length the day of rest was spent and Monday came—a calm, bright, joyous morning ; in fact, exactly such a one as would tempt the most inveterate opponent to locomotion to be up and going, so the longer to enjoy the society of my new friends,

I determined to accompany them to their first halting-place, pass the night with them, and return by land on the succeeding day. Before starting, although it was not without many protests against my liberality, I was delighted to be able to supply them with one or two trifling luxuries and a fair supply of smoked venison and fish, for heretofore—up to the date of their reaching my residence—they were compelled almost entirely to depend for food upon what their Indians could procure.

One trifling gift I was able to make them seemed to be regarded with special favour; this was no other than the ordinary buhl spoon bait. The missionary had never seen one before, and in a moment recognised its importance as a food supplier during a journey which was nearly entirely by water. Although the spoon bait is a very simple piece of fishing tackle for the expert disciple of Isaak Walton to learn the use of, the tyro would immensely benefit by an initiatory lesson, so as soon as we got clear of the first rapid, at the entrance to a long stretch of comparatively still water, opposite what has long been known by me as Otter Rock, the line was paid out, and the hooks soon after became fast in a gallant fish; in an hour as many were secured as could be utilised, so we desisted from further slaughter.

The Indians who acted as canoe-men to my visitors I have so far said nothing about, for they had only been in the service of my friends a couple of weeks, their home being about a hundred miles to the north of our present position. In manners and appearance they much resembled the aborigines that dwelt near me, and, doubtless, were an offshoot of the same race, for their language, although not identically the same, was so very similar, that they conversed with each other with ordinary fluency.

Indians that belong to different tribes are generally as ignorant of each other's language as a Cockney costermonger is of German or French; this, possibly incorrectly, causes me to believe that our present canoe-men and the people around me are sprung from the same stock. They also possessed a smattering of the lingo of the north-west traders, which is a strange jargon of bad French and worse English, doubtless acquired about some of the Hudson's Bay forts. This was the third change of guides and canoe-men the missionary had made since his departure from his distant station, such course being absolutely necessary, as the Indian seldom knows anything of a country beyond the limits of their tribe's accepted demesne, and generally evinces the strongest antipathy to cross its boundary; nor is this to be won-



dered at, for the whole race are so jealous of their ancestral possessions that a trespasser is apt to be treated with the penalty of death for presuming to encroach upon the hunting lands of another tribe.

From the description of my guests, the further you approach to the north and west, the less intelligent, and therefore lower in the scale of human beings become the aborigines, with the further characteristics of being more diminutive in height and less European in feature. The improvidence of these distant races has, doubtless, to account for this, for I am informed that, although there would not be the slightest difficulty in laying up supplies to last throughout the season when game and fish is scarce, or when the severity of the winter places an injunction upon going abroad, still every year they suffer more or less from a period of starvation. This is a fault of the Red-man everywhere—their universal motto being, let the morrow provide for itself. The thief who has been punished for his delinquency remembers his castigation, so fears again to be dishonest, or only is so when certain that he can be with impunity; not so with the Indian, although he has suffered starvation to the verge of death from his improvidence last year, he will be guilty of the same folly the next season. This pecu-



liar trait in the character of the aborigines of North America will do much towards their utter extinction when civilisation increases, and game in consequence becomes scarcer. With rivers and lakes innumerable that swarm with fish in such countless numbers that they can be gathered daily throughout the summer in thousands upon their margins, with reindeer every spring and autumn migrating north and south in droves that rival in numbers the migratory antelopes of South Africa, it appears incredible that the sparse population of this region should ever want for food; but so it is every year, and to such straits are they sometimes reduced, that even cannibalism has been known to have resulted.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON our voyage up the river we saw no large game; the reason for this being, doubtless, that the flies having ceased to be troublesome, the deer family have removed more into the uplands, but wild-duck of many varieties, principally the mallard, were most abundant, and in magnificent condition, which is invariably the case at the season when the wild rice is ripe. This plant is one of the most valuable wild cereals of the Western Continent; it grows wherever the water is shoaly and the bottom alluvial, provided always that the current is not too strong. All birds and quadrupeds that are not carnivorous feed upon it; even the Indians have their rice harvest, and gather it in large quantities. The grain is smaller and darker than the rice used in civilisation, but it is much sweeter and less insipid to the taste. I have often had it put in soup, and

found it a most valuable adjunct, while, if it is ground and baked after the manner of Australian damper, it forms a very passable bread. In England, where so much fuss is made about acclimatisation of animal and vegetable life, it is really surprising that no enterprising landed proprietor who possesses marsh lands or lakes and rivers upon his estates introduces it, for the result would certainly be an immense increase in his show of game, particularly of the migratory kinds. In the craw of the woodcock and snipe, birds that are by many supposed to live solely upon animal diet, I have found it; the wood grouse are so fond of it that they leave the quiet solitudes of their forest retreats and haunt the margins of the marshes to obtain it; while wild-fowl of every description are so partial to it for food, that while feasting upon this, their favourite diet, they forget their habitual wariness, and permit the sportsman to approach them within the shortest of range before they can be induced to flush.

After a severe day of toil to the Indians, and one, moreover, in which we had not made more than twenty miles, we reached our camping place about four P.M. Release from our necessarily cramped position in the canoe was a great relief, and although time was given to overcome our cramps and stiffness,

soon a fire was giving forth its ruddy blaze, the kettle singing its most welcome song, and a shelter of hemlock looking invitingly for occupants.

Having a great desire to kill some venison, so that my friends might have a supply of fresh meat with them after their separation from me, I took my gun, and, accompanied by the missionary, strolled into the woods. Perhaps we talked too much, or paid more attention to each other's conversation than the objects surrounding us, for we saw no game, although on every side tracks were to be observed so fresh that they could only just have been made. As the shadows began to lengthen rapidly, we deemed it prudent to retrace our steps, which we had scarcely commenced to do, when our attention was called to a family of Canadian grouse dropping from a tree into a small space of comparatively speaking open ground. The better to observe them, we took advantage of some intervening brush, then succeeded in finding shelter behind a windfall. Not over forty yards severed us now from the birds, which were perfectly ignorant of our proximity. I was hesitating whether I should not fire at them, when my attention was attracted to an animal moving close by. In a moment after a bay lynx made its appearance, and, crouching with its stomach almost to the ground, rapidly advanced

towards the grouse. When within fifteen yards or thereabouts of them, with its limbs bent under it so as to be able to spring with greatest power, it raised its head over an intervening branch which had acted as its screen, and took a survey of the prey. Its eyes seemed fairly to glower upon the birds. In this position it remained some minutes with an intentness in its expression, a craving for blood, that was almost demon-like. More and more the lynx brought its hind legs beneath its body; once or twice it appeared to gather itself for the final spring, and as often postponed it. At length, with a bound that nearly cleared the intervening space, it dashed among its prey, and in an instant struck down with its paw one of the little family. Anything more brilliantly or rapidly executed I never saw; in fact, it was a masterpiece of the most skilful strategy.

I am almost ashamed to confess that I would have shot the animal, but my companion interposed, stating that it only played the part that the Maker had intended, and that as it was of comparatively little use to us, it would be a sin to deprive it of life. How seldom we think on these matters; how much better that we did so more frequently. I do not for a moment wish it to be understood that the extinction of vermin on an estate is unnecessary, quite the

reverse, for there a comparatively useless animal destroys an immense amount of useful human food ; but here, where there was a superabundance for all, the circumstances were completely altered.

That evening, no lullaby or opiate was necessary to send us to sleep, for all were tired with the exertions of the day and the constant exposure to the fresh air, so whether the lucifees yelled, the wolves howled, or the owls hooted, no one in the morning appeared to know, so thoroughly had all enjoyed their night of rest.

At length our last meal together, possibly for ever, certainly for a long, long time, was finished, the sundry traps deposited in the canoe, and all was ready for the start, save the embarkation of the good old missionary and his devoted wife. Both seemed loth to bid good-bye, and deferred in consequence pronouncing it till the last moment ; but further pretext for delay became inexpedient, the old gentleman in consequence took off his cap, thus permitting his long, straggling white hair to float in the breeze, making him look the ideal representative of what he was.

“ Before we sever, let me ask the great and good God, who has ever kept my wife and self from all danger, to take you, too, under his guardianship during your sojourn upon earth, and into his

fold when the hour to leave it has arrived. May God bless you."

Shaking hands with an earnestness seldom given to the ceremony in civilisation, I assisted both into their places, the canoe noiselessly glided over the sparkling stream, a wooded point of fir-trees soon it had passed, and I was alone, but with one of the pleasantest episodes of my life so firmly indented on my mind that it must ever remain verdant in my memory.

No, I doubt, and certainly hope that I shall never forget Carl and Breda Schmidt, and if they have all the prosperity and happiness I wish, then will they receive a full measure of these blessings. I have met a great many Germans, and the more I have seen, the more qualities to admire I have found them possessed of. As husbands, friends, foes, they are sincere, and play their part in all with purpose.

The association of such a person with any uncivilised race must have been beneficial in a double sense, first, to instruct and teach; secondly, to give its members an appreciation of the white man that must materially add to his safety when thrown among them. It is a great pity that there are not more missionaries like Mr. Schmidt; the reason being, that clergymen as a rule do not, or will not, comprehend



that example is far more valuable to the unenlightened than precept. The success of that never-to-be-forgotten good man, William Penn, among the Indians, and the number of proselytes that he made to Christianity, was entirely owing to example, combined with tolerance of errors in those who were incompetent to distinguish right from wrong. Thus the early settlements of Pennsylvania received for years perfect immunity from the fearful scenes of massacre and bloodshed that marked all other parts of the Western Continent in its early colonisation. The tall, erect, and noble countenanced, weather-tanned man, by his side his wife, the patient, enduring, and fond partner of his labour, the graceful birch-bark canoe and its dusky crew, the bright, clear, rippling river, and the surrounding, silent, brilliant foliaged trees, would have formed no unworthy picture for the artist's skill, and one not unlike what I have seen among a collection of historical paintings that deck the principal public edifice in Washington.

By a straight line northward, with slight divergence to the east, my route home can scarcely exceed fifteen miles; but then the walking is rough, and possibly in parts swampy, so I no further give way to sad feelings or loneliness, but calling up Poteen, who is deeply interested in an attempt to investigate the

interior of a marmot's earth, or to get an opportunity to worry its occupant, leave the margin of the river and push forward into the timber. The characteristics of the country at first were nice rolling lands covered with beech, birch, and maple, intersected by innumerable rivulets, the soil appearing to be tolerably free from stone—an objection generally to be found in the greater portion of this locality. When emigration has swamped that portion of North America that is blessed with less severe winters than here, the exodus of the pale face will doubtless be directed hence, and what a change will come over the face of the land! The yellow oats, the russet upland hay, the verdant, closely-bottomed meadow, will take the place of the primæval forest, and the echo now seldom waked, and then only by knocking of the moose or cariboo, by the tapping of the woodpecker, the screech of the owl, or howl of the wild-cat or wolf, will reverberate with the child's laugh, the axe's unceasing blows, or the bellow of cattle or bleat of sheep standing knee-deep in luxuriant pasture. How few are there who will not like such a picture, and wish earnestly that it was in their power to be among the pioneers that produce it; but let me tell the reader that a long, long time will pass after their advent into the new home—many days, months,

years of unremitting toil and privation before the change predicted is accomplished, and then not one out of a hundred will live to see the desired result accrue from their days and nights of labour. It is the adage of "*sic vos vobis*" repeated again.

I am convinced, too, in addition to the other attractions of this neighbourhood, that coal abounds throughout the greater portion of it, and at no great distance beneath the surface. This conclusion I arrive at from having discovered a vein of no trifling extent cropping out by the river's bank.

With the passage of time, the day has undergone a complete change, for the bright exhilarating morning has given place to a dreamy, lethargic, hazy, still day—a specimen of the Indian summer in its greatest intenseness. In a modified form, Indian summer weather is truly delightful, but when it assumes the superlative degree, it is as much to be reprobated as the sirocco in the Mediterranean.

Little caring for the woods when under such depressing influences, I increased my pace with the hope to accomplish my journey as soon as possible. I had been walking about three hours, and in that time certainly traversed eight or nine miles, so should have quite accomplished half the distance home, and be entering a country familiar to my eye; still

all appeared strange. This rather puzzled me at first, but I [consoled myself by thinking that it was caused by the distance being obscured by the haze; so continued my route. However, an hour afterwards, when I had got into a hemlock swamp of the very densest and wettest description, I began to feel convinced that my bump of locality was not so well developed as I imagined, so resolved, very much against my will—for I believed that I was almost equal to the Indian in finding my way—to consult my compass. First I felt one pocket, then another, but all was useless, I had forgotten it, left it at home, and that upon an occasion when I urgently required its services. Was not this most provoking? I can assure you I felt it so, but “what can’t be cured must be endured,” so I faced about and endeavoured to retrace my steps, so as to get out of the swamp as soon as possible. This I imagined at the time an easy matter; any person would be justified in thinking so; but it was quite the reverse; the more I walked, and, as I supposed, retired from the low-lying, wet ground, the further I seemed to advance into it, and the more intricate and dense became the undergrowth and fallen timber. At length, perfectly exhausted, and far from in an amiable frame of mind, I sat down with the hope of

devising ways and means of escaping from my dilemma. Although I had my ground-rug with me, and the means of making a fire, still I was far from enjoying the prospect of spending the night alone in these solitudes, so, to obviate so unpleasant a *contretemps*, I ascended one of the tallest trees with the hope of learning in what direction high, and consequently dry ground lay; but the haze seemed to shut in the distance with a veil, and entirely obscure the sun's position. More disgusted and more thoroughly realising the strait I was placed in, I descended, resolving as near as possible to keep a direct course and trust in Providence. The tendency that all persons have to walk in a circle of greater or less extent, when lost in the woods, I was quite aware of, so to know that I was not doing so, I lopped off an occasional limb, to mark the course I was taking, sincerely trusting that I should not again set my eyes on them. The solitude, stillness, and sombreness of the foliage had such a thoroughly depressing effect upon my spirits, that I ceased to wonder that persons in such predicaments often go out of their minds; I can imagine no more painful situation than mine, unless adrift in a boat, on a tropical sea, the water without a ripple, the sky without a cloud, and the sun pelting down upon the unfortunates

its fiercest rays; it is one of such utter helplessness, where the brain or mind appears to be useless to assist your endeavours, and each sense to be at variance with the other. To get excited of course was absurd, but you have so great a tendency to become so, that one requires to exercise no small amount of moral restraint to prevent it; but if the wanderer should give way, first to run then to shout is his desire, both of which performances rapidly increase prostration, and thus deprive you of your strength, the very necessary that is requisite to save you. Hours had now passed, and not the slightest prospect of relief could I discern unless the haze that hung over the forest should blow off and the sun again become visible. But such was far from probable, for night, from the gloom and shadows becoming more intense, and the entire cessation of the notes and calls of the day-loving birds and insects, was apparently rapidly approaching. To be lost is never pleasant, but if it had been on the dry uplands, where I could have stretched my wearied frame upon the soil without becoming saturated with swamp water, or obtained an abundance of dry wood to make an invigorating companionable fire, I should not have had such cause for regret, but here, to lay down was impossible, and even if wood dry



enough to burn could be found, there was no place sufficiently free from water on which to place it. There was but one misery to complete my unhappiness, viz., mosquitoes, which, although at this season almost unknown on the barrens and open lands, literally swarmed around me in countless thousands, and if I halted for a moment, attacked with such vigour as to intimate that they had been kept on starvation allowance, and were now determined to make up for their previous fast. Continuing on my legs so long, that from the increasing darkness I had almost dislocated my limbs over fallen trees, and broken my neck over standing ones, I was compelled to halt; a lately prostrated tree was beside me; against its trunk I leaned, wrapping the ground-sheet around my body to keep out the damp swamp exhalations. From my feet remaining stationary and supporting a portion of my weight, soon I was ankle deep in the clammiest, softest mud, which, now it had been disturbed, sent forth an exhalation of the most disagreeable kind.

I have seen it dark before, so dark that it was impossible to imagine more perfect Erebus; but here, under the thickly-foliaged sombre hemlocks it was so intense, that I almost imagined I could feel its pressure. My pipe had never been previously so valued, yet I was deprived of a portion of the plea-



sure of my smoke by not being able to see the circling cloud that arose from it, the glowing coal being the only thing to inform me that it was lighted. But the craving for tobacco, like the appetite, becomes satiated, so after a time even that solace was denied me. How wearying and interminable was that night it would be impossible to describe, and if I closed my eyes it was not to sleep, but to shut out the painfully intense darkness. I have often previously thought how monotonous and disagreeable must be the two hours spent in a sentry-box by a soldier at some out-of-the-way post, where no human being or animal life is near; but my position was a thousand times worse, for no friendly relief could I expect to terminate my imprisonment, no dry sentry-box floor to stand upon. It is wonderful how a weak-minded or superstitious person becomes affected under circumstances similar to those in which I was placed; even people brave as lions and fearing nothing mortal, from having listened to the absurd stories and superstitions of an old servant in their youth, grow up to man's estate with such an indescribable dread of supernatural beings, as to completely demoralise them. I remember well such an instance, although it is years since it occurred and is connected with another portion of the world, still I will relate it.

While our troops were in the East, and previous to open hostilities occurring with the enemy, in my routine of duty I had to take charge of a subaltern's guard. The post of one of the outlying sentries was in a graveyard of immense extent, and densely planted with cypress trees. It was the custom of the people here to place very tall tombstones, ornamented with a head-like top, over the last resting-places of their friends or relatives. After the manner of Moslem countries, this burying-ground was so neglected, that these mementoes of the dead reclined at every conceivable angle, or lay prostrate upon the ground, while a dense growth of semi-tropical creepers grew in the wild profusion of neglect. As might have been expected, the jackals of the neighbouring country had selected this sombre funeral spot as a favourite haunt, and night after night held high revelry among the remains of departed mortality. In the midnight relief was a young soldier, his age about twenty, therefore but lately enlisted. In appearance he was tall and well formed, just such a lad as could not pass Westminster without being pounced on by every recruiting sergeant that chanced to set eye on him. Brought up in a sequestered valley in the north of Ireland, this youth had often listened to narrations of the superstitious population about banshees having been heard or leprechauns seen, and that the

voice of the one foretold immediate death, and the sight of the other serious misfortune. A change in the weather prophesied a heavy fall of rain, so the jackals, after the manner of their genus, commenced to make night hideous with their unearthly voices, and these animals were here almost as numerous as rabbits in a warren. About half-past one I went to visit the sentries; a quarter of an hour later I reached the vicinity where the lad had been posted; we received no challenge, the place and night were not such as would be likely to cause the recruit to fall asleep, so I possibly made more than a necessary amount of noise that he might become aware of our presence. At length I spoke to the corporal, who accompanied me, in a voice sufficiently elevated to be heard over fifty yards off, yet no challenge was vouchsafed me, further we could not see the man.

I became alarmed for the youngster's safety; Greeks and Turks, too, carried knives, and were known to have used them when plunder or revenge was to be obtained. Moreover, there are numerous fanatical followers of Islam who believe that by taking the life of a Christian dog they are insuring a certain passport to heaven, so, without further delay, we marched up to the post. Pale as a corpse, and with

eyes distended with fear, there stood the lad; so demoralised had he become from the loneliness of his situation, and listening to the constant jeering and satanic howling of the jackals, that he had lost the power of speech or movement.

I should have reported the circumstance, but did not; my reward was to know afterwards, that in the field, where hard blows were struck and unfailing courage before a gallant enemy requisite, this lad bore himself as nobly as any soldier that carried a musket in his regiment.

Years afterwards, by a bivouac fire in the north of China, near the hour of midnight, a smart, handsome, non-commissioned officer might have been seen talking to me; on his breast were several medals. It was the hero of the graveyard thanking me for having spared him, and explaining that he really was not answerable for the inexplicable fear that had overcome him.

But, thank goodness, I was not one of that sort; possibly, if becoming oblivious to the passage of time was a desideratum, it might have been better that I was, for, although the period of darkness and light at this season are about equal, twelve hours appeared beaten out into twenty-four. The entire night, being compelled to remain almost in one position, from the

softness of the slimy soil, I was up to the knees in mud and slush, while the mosquitoes, doubtless considering that they were being thus deprived of a portion of their prey, massed their columns for attack on the still unburied part of my body ; and from the manner in which they thrust their mandibles into me, if one could judge by feeling, not seeing, they must have been of no ordinary size.

The insect inhabitants of this swamp reminded me of a yarn which, I must say, I had long been sceptical as to its veracity. In a certain part of the United States, where these bloodsuckers were both numerous and large, a settler in the spring of the year took his axe and copper kettle into the woods to prepare a camp for making maple sugar. He had commenced tapping the trees when he was attacked by innumerable mosquitoes ; every effort to drive them off was unavailing, so to save himself from being eaten alive, he ultimately reversed the copper boiler, and, axe in hand, got under it ; but even here he was not safe, for the gallinippers disregarded his metal shield and forced their powerful bills through it, in the hope of striking ile by sticking them in their prey. Matters now became serious, and the prisoner commenced to think what was to be done in such an emergency. Of all people there are none so fertile

in invention, especially when placed in unexpected difficulties. Now this settler was not one whit behind his race, so he turned round and prepared for action. With his axe in hand he waited his chance, and as soon as he saw a bill of the persecutors come through the boiler's bottom, there and then he clenched it. For three long mortal hours was he kept at this work; never was blacksmith's hammer plied more incessantly, till, poor man, he began to think that he had done the hardest day's work of his life. Thus he was just about giving out when the boiler commenced to move; slowly at first it was raised from the ground, more rapidly it ascended as it gained elevation, and, alas! the poor fellow saw his bran new pot rapidly going off for the next county.

It's an ill wind that blows no good luck. Some of the mosquitoes got tired; others had their bills pulled out, so just as they got across the county line they let the boiler drop. Abe Blunt—who was the biggest loafer in these parts, and had done so many bad turns to the would-be maker of maple sugar, that if that unfortunate had an improper wish, it would be that a rattlesnake would get into this unfriendly neighbour's bed or a bear chaw him up—was sitting out on the fence taking stock of his mint—for he was a rare hand this Abe Blunt at mint juleps—when down came the



boiler smash on his head, and the mint in his garden spoilt that year for want of gathering. Our settler was not uncharitable, he left the copper with the widow, and to this day she uses it for a sieve. My informant added, that anybody who was too darned particular to take it upon his word, had but to go to Bunkum, Illinois, and there could see the copper kettle.

But it is all very well to joke about a thing when it is over; that night, sitting in the swamp alone with the mosquitoes singing to me, was not a joke, and long before day broke, when the owls opened their concert proclaiming its approach, I rejoiced even down to the soles of my boots. At length the day did break, and light imperceptibly glided into day, for the same haze of Indian summer was upon the face of the earth. Not having eaten since the previous morning, I produced my supplies; fortunately they could be rendered palatable without fire, and humble and commonplace as they were, no sauce was required to give me an appetite. How fortunately are all these things ordained, for if, after hours of fast, and suffering from the prostration resulting from it, we were as fastidious in our taste and disinclined to take food, as we frequently are when leading a life of ease and luxury, how soon would terminate our powers of endurance.

Through all the night a most unhappy dog has been



Poteen; this morning his countenance is wobegone, and his manner *distrain*; even the curl with which he was wont to carry his tail over his hurdies has now lost its stiffness, and no longer would be regarded by canine acquaintances as ornamental.

Although we shared pretty nearly alike at our morning meal as far as quantity went, he evinced his bad breeding by first gulping down his portion, and afterwards, while I ate my meagre repast, greedily devouring mine with his eyes. But I have long regarded him as a very common dog, in spite of all Master Sugar says to the contrary, and all the wonderful anecdotes he narrates of his intelligence, cupboard love is what his affection most appropriately can be called, and if it were not that the Indian boy was a warm bedfellow and a good friend to have in the kitchen, Poteen would not show a particle of partiality for him. A very dirty, unattractive pair of tramps we must have looked when we resumed our walk in the morning. I wonder what the police would have thought or said if we had by some enchantment been conveyed to a London suburb; probably they would neither have looked nor said much, but taken the fact for granted and run us in forthwith. Miserable as we were, there was no use sitting down under it; action was the only thing

that could save us, so with weary gait and fever-heated brow I pushed forward, scarcely hoping to escape from imprisonment, for no change had taken place in the appearance of the day, the same heavy mist still hanging over the woodland. As far as I can judge it must have been about noon that I came across one of the twigs I had broken yesterday to mark my position. By it I learned that I could not have so far entered the swamp as I commenced to suppose—a circumstance that I had every reason to be thankful for, because if it would only clear up, from the top of a tree I could have no difficulty discovering in what direction the high lands lay.

In all forests, except in the densest of swamps, you can generally determine the points of the compass by observing on which side of the trees the greatest amount of moss grows, for it is ever most abundant facing where the prevailing cold winds blow from, and as that in America is north, with slight variations of east or west, according to locality, a tolerably correct line can easily be made in any course. My position was much like that which the sailor is often placed in, off a port he is most anxious to enter, yet dares not approach closer from the thickness of the weather, so has to turn his ves-

sel's head seaward and wait patiently for friendly breezes to disperse the fogs. The friendly breezes not evincing any tendency to come, I looked out for the most suitable sleeping-place I could find, so that, at all events, I should not have to endure the torture of the previous night ; in this I was specially fortunate, for on a knoll sufficiently elevated to be dry, I discovered a windfall, the roots of which formed a most convenient couch, the open space out of which they had been wrenched being admirably suited for a fire. Nothing was to be gained by going further, so I gathered some dry sticks, started a flame, and so commenced housekeeping. You may rely upon it that there is nothing equal to a fire to make a place home-like, and my dog also thought so, for he as persistently blinked his eyes and nodded his head over its comforting warmth as I have done when seated at church on a Sunday in a too comfortable family pew. I have often thought, and I dare say correctly, that it must be intensely annoying to a parson to see members of his congregation asleep, while he is giving utterance to his carefully-studied and eloquently-expressed doctrines ; but this class are generally so mild in their nature, so much better than any others of the human family, that it is possible they do not suffer from that commonplace ailment inherent to

most persons, temper ; this is one of those fortunate provisions of nature, the adapting of men to circumstances, which we daily see and cannot help admiring. Still there are exceptions to the rule, for, if I am informed correctly—remember I am only writing from common report, but in the word of a multitude of witnesses there is generally truth—that when our marines had the misfortune to be landed on the mud-banks at the mouth of the Peiho River, in China, a certain worthy chaplain, who accompanied the expedition, preferred taking a sword in one hand and a revolver in another to carrying a Bible under his arm, and rumour further added he used the carnal weapons with as much skill as he usually employed the spiritual ones.

But for the mosquitoes and a certain craving in my lower regions, that plainly said my stomach had not lately been treated fairly, I dare say I should have spent a tolerably comfortable night ; but these trifles keeping me awake caused me to hear the most diabolical serenade of wolves, in which Poteen needs must assist. Why is it that dogs will be guilty of such folly ? for, by doing so, they inform their enemies where they are, in fact, almost give them an invitation to come and destroy them. These wolves were not baying me,

probably they were perfectly unaware of my vicinity, but fighting over some large animal they had succeeded in pulling down. Day at length broke; having nothing to make breakfast off, my start was not delayed, and I was able to do it in the lightest of marching order. My first step was to ascend a tree; the haze had completely disappeared, a clearer, brighter morning could not be desired, and strange to say, after all my wanderings, all my search, all the discomfort I had endured from wet and mosquitoes, high land covered with firs, and hardwood trees was within—well, less than a mile. However agreeable this was to learn, I could have whipped myself from very disgust that I, who prided myself on my knowledge of woodcraft, in my almost rivalling the Indian in my power to find my way, should have spent two days in wandering in a swamp and two nights a prey to mosquitoes, when within so short a distance there was ground on which I could have been comparatively comfortable, and very probably obtained a supply of game for food. Thank goodness in a quarter of an hour I was again upon dry soil, and never did man feel more thankful than when each step of my foot ceased to produce the response of splash, splash, splash, from the filthy swamp water. The adage, “it never rains but it

pours," was verified, for scarcely had I been on *terra firma* thirty minutes, when I knocked over a brace of Canadian grouse, and, through the assistance of Poteen, captured a porcupine. A continuance of my tramp was then postponed that the inward man might be refreshed, and during the intervals necessary in turning the roasting delicacies that were sputtering over a bright clear fire, I could not help regarding the disreputable appearance of my foot gear, which constant soaking had rendered almost totally unfit for the purpose it was intended; but in this out-of-the-way place, where no mortal eye would gaze on me, what did it matter, so long as my feet were protected from thorns and stones. It is wonderful how soon we become careless in such matters—how soon civilised man relapses into barbarism; a lifetime may not be long enough to make a gentleman out of a country bumpkin, but a very few years will generally change the most highly-educated man into the most perfect barbarian, even to out-Herod Herod himself. Thus, I once came across a person who had been living among the Black-feet Indians for nigh twenty years. An Englishman, he had expatriated himself on account of having accidentally shot his brother. Although a graduate of Cambridge, a gentleman by birth, few

could have detected him from one of the aborigines, so darkened and weather-beaten had his skin become through exposure to the smoke of the camp-fire and the sun. Moreover, he had forgotten to read and write his own language, almost to speak it, and report said, that no greater fiend was there in fight or one who craved more for scalps than this renegade. This latter I can well believe, from the numerous decorations each of his squaws wore, many of which, I could not help having a strong suspicion, had been stripped off white instead of red-women; but *requiescat in pace*, the deer hath been slain that has fed upon the grass that grew over his last resting-place.

Much restored in health and spirits, and with little doubt but that I should reach the shanty before night, with light heart and step I recommenced my journey homewards. The day was bright, the wind mild; in fact, an air of gladness was over the face of the landscape, and all animal life felt it. Again and again the short bark of the moose echoed over the ridges, while the querulous chatter of the woodpecker, now and then interrupted by his pecking taps, far from unpleasantly fell upon the ear; still, although I did not saunter to listen to these surroundings, or to note the doings of their pro-



ducers, to my surprise I still was in a country whose features were entirely unknown to me. The sun, we all know, sets in the west, so when there were but a couple of hours remaining before it reached the horizon, I directed my course towards where I thought it would dip, in the hope at least of reaching the river. For an hour and a half I pursued this course, when I found myself upon the edge of a swamp as dark and apparently interminable as that I had escaped from in the morning. The prospect of passing another twelve hours in such a disagreeable situation deterred me from attempting to cross it, so I retraced my steps and sought for a camping place. This was soon found, so much against my will I resigned myself to the necessity of passing another night from home.

I thought of the uneasiness my little Indian boy would experience at my protracted absence, and whether if Cariboo, or any of his tribe, were at the shanty, they would come to search for me, but the prospect of their discovering a person lost in such a boundless waste of woodland was as improbable as finding a needle dropped in a hay-stack. Although having every reason to be thankful that I had escaped from the wet, clammy swamp and its dank timber, I could not help growling at my own want of skill and forgetfulness in not having brought

my compass. Many and many a time I caught myself wishing that I had the wings of a bird, or the limbs and sagacity of the moose, that I might with unerring power direct my course homewards, for I commenced to feel a kind of presentiment that my protracted absence might bode no good to my gear and residence, particularly if such an idea should cross the Indians' brains that I had continued with the missionary, and used his departure as an excuse for escaping from their country. The Red-man is ever suspicious, the daily experiences of their lives, watching the craft of the wild animals and devising means to outwit them, makes them so; and, although they could possibly find no pretext in anything I had ever done for founding the supposition that I had bolted, still my absence possibly would cause them to conclude that I had. My supply of tobacco has got to so low an ebb, that to-day I place myself on half rations; this did not interfere with my night's rest, for, although the owls commenced their *chanson* early and were manfully backed up by the wolves, I slept well, and did not wake till daylight, when I found the weather lowering and threatening, with something more than a Scotch mist descending, therefore again no sun was to be seen, and I must be guided in my search for escape by the mosses upon the trees.

Constantly descending rain, with every leaf and

branch loaded with moisture, is not conducive to the pleasure of a tramp through woodland, more especially if you feel uncertain as to your course, and have a strong suspicion that night will bring you no relief. I cannot deny having ere this felt depression of spirits and that sinking of the heart that ever precedes conviction that your situation is fraught with danger; but to-day it increased to such an extent that I refused myself rest in case the inaction should allow it to overcome me; thus I kept incessantly on the move, steering, as well as I could, a straight course, at the same time carefully avoiding being entrapped into swamps.

Towards the afternoon the characteristics of the country commenced to undergo a marked change, for the deciduous timber became less abundant and more dwarfed, and in many places acres occurred covered with nothing but a monotonous tangle of briars and brushwood. This alteration momentarily raised a hope that I had reached the barren, situated two or three miles behind the shanty, but the distance was so obscured by the drizzle and mist, that all beyond a hundred yards of my position was an unknown world, so that I might have passed within a comparatively short distance of a most familiar landmark without observing it.

Poteen, who has been for the last twenty-four hours a most unhappy-looking companion, obstinately refuses to do otherwise than trot at my heels, his ears flat to his head, and his tail—generally carried so jauntily—dragging behind him. I never had any great attachment to this cur, but never has he occupied so low a place in my estimation. Having come to a collection of boulders, whose outline struck me as familiar, I stopped to make a close observation of them; while doing so, the dog pricked up his ears and listened intently, the expression of his countenance giving evidence that what he heard was either familiar or pleasant sounds; for several seconds he stood thus, then slowly walked forward, stopped again for a few moments; this last halt had evidently decided his course of conduct, for he broke into a steady, resolute trot, turning his head neither to the right nor left, and rapidly increasing the distance between us. Immediately it struck me that I was going to be deserted; first I whistled, then called, but all in vain, my efforts obviously only serving to increase his celerity till he was lost to sight. Ceasing my attempts to recall him, I fear I hurled upon his ungrateful carcass everything but blessings. But what could it mean? either that the dog recognised his position, or that he heard

voices that he knew. Supposing the latter probably to be the case, I fired two shots in rapid succession, anxiously and with palpitating heart listening for a response; hope, fear, doubt, followed in rapid succession, till despondency ensued. Though chary of my ammunition, for my supply was getting low—and how much depended upon it—I again fired each barrel, but, alas! with no better result, and their echoes had not ceased to reverberate from rock and corry over ten minutes, when I renewed my tramp, for I could not endure the thoughts and fears that kept flooding my brain when I remained inactive.

It might have been an hour later, when I heard the short abrupt call of a bull-moose; experience told me it was the defiant note that the males so frequently utter at this season. At first it was not regarded with importance, but when it was several times repeated, and that so close that a few minutes' stalk would bring me within sight of the deer, I deviated slightly from my course, and advanced towards where I supposed the game stood. Having passed over the requisite distance, I halted to listen, but no sound could I hear that denoted the presence of animal life. Again I advanced, again stopped, but all was as still as if I were in an uninhabited world. At length a rustle, caused by the dragging of a

brier, followed by a stamp made by a heavy hoof, broke the stillness, and a moment after I discovered the object of my search. So keenly was the quarry intent on listening to some distant sound, that, although within fifty paces, he was quite unaware of my vicinity. The attitude of the giant was grand and imposing; his mane and the coarse hair along his back stood erect, while every few seconds he tossed his ponderous antlers with the defiant air that denoted no knowledge of fear, or stamped his immense foot as indicative that he would crush into the earth all that disputed his claim to monarch of the waste. Sheltered by a rock clothed with a dense network of creepers, I watched with repressed breath what, to all admirers of animal life, was a charming picture. With a shake of the head, and holding his muzzle aloof, he sounded the challenge note; immediately it was responded to, the approach of the rival being at the same time heralded by the loud rustling produced by the rapid advance of a large animal through the brush. Gazing intently to where the sound emanated my champion stood, his head lowered, and body braced—resolution and indomitable courage being stamped upon his attitude; nor was he long detained in suspense, when a worthy foe trotted into the arena. The

new-comer was the taller and older animal of the two, but in development of muscle and flesh was inferior. For an instant each surveyed the other, then rising simultaneously on their hind legs, sprung forward with a rearing movement, and met with a crash, the impetus and power of which would have carried so heavy a body through a brick wall. As the contestants came together both fell on their knees ; but now the action had commenced there was no receding, no shirking, both being apparently alike determined to die or conquer. The brow antlers were the tines that were altogether employed as weapons, and the strength with which they were warded off or struck into each other, with an upward sidelong stroke, was truly terrific. On one occasion the moose which I had first seen came to the ground from a heavy blow he had received ; his right leg being bent under him, while the other was thrown out far in advance ; but with a sudden action he succeeded in getting his brow antler under the flank of his foe at the back of the fore-shoulder, and with an effort that must have entailed the exercise of enormous strength, regained his feet, at the same time raising his rival almost entirely off the ground. Ten minutes of such tremendous exertion soon told upon both, for their tongues, covered with soil and blood, hung flaccidly



from their mouths, and their eyes distended far beyond their ordinary size, appeared as if they would burst from their sockets. Prostration arising from the unwonted strain was doubtless the cause, for the strife now was entirely carried on upon their knees, and closer proximity of the animals to the ground made the earth, sod, and brush fly in every direction. Even a bull moose, possessed of all the vindictiveness and hate that these animals have for a rival, must succumb to excessive exertion and want of breath; thus frequent pauses now occurred in the combat; but these were only momentary, for a movement of either renewed the war with redoubled animosity, again gradually to cease from sheer weariness.

There had been an unusually long pause, preceded by a terribly severe struggle, both animals being at the time on their knees, when the younger elk managed to get his tine under the fore-arm of the other; desperate were the efforts here displayed, terminating by the older animal being thrown on his flank, the other at the same instant regaining his legs. The fight, I could see, was virtually over, for the prostrate warrior was again and again as he attempted to rise crushed to the ground. Youth, superior agility, and strength, had vanquished the veteran.

I have done many a foolish thing in my life, but none that was likely to cost me dearer than my present rashness, and past experience should have taught me better, for on the Yellowstone River, when, out of feelings dictated by the purest motives, I interfered to prevent a coterie of wolves pulling down a worn-out, effete, old buffalo, the return I got for my philanthropy was the old brute making a feeble charge with the ungrateful hope of impaling me upon its horns. But my assailant on this occasion was in all the flush of victory, health, strength, and maturity. In this wise it happened. Anxious to witness every strategy that was put in practice, leaving my gun behind me, I had thoughtlessly withdrawn from my shelter and approached the combatants. While the victory was doubtful, neither of the moose had observed me, but now that the battle was virtually over, the hero cast his eyes about him, possibly to see what fair one was there to applaud his prowess, in doing so his gaze fell on me. A moment's thought told me of my imprudence; without hesitation I turned to the right-about, and bolted for the boulder; well I did so, for a few instants after the deer charged past me. However, missing the object of his pursuit, he returned to search for it, when the first thing that caught his observation was his old foe regaining

his legs. To spare the vanquished was evidently not part of his creed, so with lowered front he dashed for his late antagonist, but again to be foiled, for the veteran had risen ere he reached him, and from the deep crashing of the brush that ensued afterwards, was making the best use of his legs to get out of so dangerous a neighbourhood. Crestfallen, wounded, and humiliated, no longer was this hero of a hundred fights to hold his head aloft as monarch of the waste, but fear in every cracking branch, every heavy tread, the pursuit of his conqueror.

Without trouble I could easily have shot the remaining moose; but, although he had treated me so scurvily, I could not bring myself to cut off so gallant an animal in the hour of his triumph, and at the commencement of his reign over the barren and forest. If I had wanted food, it would have been otherwise, but the supply I had retained from my last camping-place was still sufficient, particularly as my faithless dog had deserted me.

## CHAPTER VII.

OH! genus *canis*, in thy race are characters to be found as dissimilar as among genus *homo*. This may be accepted as a compliment to show how varied and innumerable can be reckoned their traits worthy of admiration. Let the reader misunderstand me if he will purposely do so; but to be explicit, and crush all doubts upon the point at issue, I will further add that there are as big rogues, ungrateful sneaks, untrustworthy scoundrels to be met among dogs as there are among men. I do not know, still I very much believe, if an average in both races were struck of those possessing good qualities, but that the four-footed animal would take the palm, therefore, instead of debasing the biped by calling him puppy and cur, we do the reverse.

After all, Poteen had only deserted me in my hour of need; a grave offence certainly, but not nearly so

heinous as if he had turned his teeth upon the hand that had caressed him—upon the companion that had supplied him with food and shelter; but Antoine not only had deserted, but attempted my life when I only demanded justice at his hands. Thus the bastard half-breed Frenchman was a greater scoundrel than the bastard colley; if either had been of pure strain, I doubt that their conscience would have permitted such ingratitude, so your hybrids of all kinds, unless it be between the horse and ass, are to be repudiated. Even the last-mentioned cross are not always to be relied upon, still their wonderful utility, hardiness, and endurance, induces you to look more leniently on their faults, for their owners invariably receive a very large *quid* for a very small *quo*.

Since the death of Skye, I have tried very hard to shut him out of my thoughts, but, do all I could, I was unable to help comparing the difference between his character and that of the deserter. Had he, poor little fellow, been in Poteen's place, nothing, I feel confident, would had induced him to leave me; but fortune does not always follow the brave—his early fate, as the death of many a gallant youth, proves it.

This night was truly a dismal one; my feet agonisingly sore from chafing, my garments as wet as it was

possible for them to be, while rheumatic pains kept reminding me that, after all, I was but mortal. However, I exerted myself, and built a large fire for the double purpose of warmth and to serve as a beacon if mortal eyes were within seeing distance; of this I had little hope, yet did it for that inexplicable reason that the shipwrecked mariner bales his boat, although aware that the frail craft in which he is buffeting about on the storm-tossed ocean, ships more water in a minute than he can free her from in five.

Painful were my thoughts as I cowered over the livid blaze, for never did a fire feel less companionable, and, though not superstitious when in health, I fear that I have become so, for the slightest rustle among the trees, or an unusual or inexplicable shadow, brought dread of lurking danger, and strung my nervous system to such a pitch that I could hear my heart beat. Is it to be wondered, then, that I could not sleep? Occasionally I might relapse into a drowsy state, but soon was brought back to consciousness by the horrid fancies that swamped my brain, and occasionally some of these would assume such a ghastly form, that I was compelled to rise, and by unravelling them, prove to myself, almost against my inclination, that they had no reality. After so long and tedious a night, day was hailed with pleasure,

but, alas! the weather was again quite the reverse from that desired, for heavy fog with occasional showers were its characteristics; but it was more injurious to get soaked sitting than when on the move, so, in spite of sore feet, numerous bruises, and frequent twinges of rheumatism, I made an early start.

Now that I was out of the timber, there was nothing to guide me, not even a breeze, which, by constantly facing, provided it continued blowing from the same direction, a tolerably straight course could be pursued, so I feared my exertions were purposeless, and therefore unlikely to result in any benefit. Several hours I had thus been on foot, when a dull, distant sound struck my ear; at first it was so subdued that it might have been mistaken for the sighing of wind through forest trees, but this was impossible, for not the slightest current of moving air fanned my cheek. However, I directed my steps as well as I could towards where it seemed to proceed from, and more and more distinct became the noise. After intently listening for some minutes, I concluded it was the distance-softened roar of a swift rapid, and as I was unaware of any sufficiently big stream existing in this locality to produce such a volume of sound, except that which flowed by the shanty, hope of release recommenced to glimmer in my breast, so with quicker steps I pushed forward.



The barren ground soon gave place to open woodland of deciduous trees, which became more dense as I advanced; this was cheering, for well I knew a rapid water-course would most probably be margined by such. The unknown noise now became so distinct that it was apparent I could not be far from what produced it, yet I began to doubt that its origin was what I supposed, for the song of the rushing torrent was far livelier in its cadence. However, I was not long detained in uncertainty, for, after pushing my way through sixty or seventy yards of hazel bush, I found myself at the summit of a precipice nearly fifty feet high, at the base of which rolled a heavy ground swell, breaking with great force upon a shingle beach.

It was impossible that it could be otherwise than the large lake on which my friendly Indians lived, thus giving me further hope of relief as soon as the weather became propitious.

There are few occasions in my life in which I have felt more grateful than the present, for I am convinced that a forty-eight hours' longer wandering on the barren would have deprived me of the power of further exertion, if not of reason.

Seeing that there was no perceptible breeze, the size and length of the rollers that broke upon the

beach indicated a wide expanse of open water, and I had never heard the Indians, who dwelt near the *embouchure* of my river, speak of any other large lake existing within the bounds of their hunting-ground. Thus while the thick weather continued, I determined to remain where I was, so at once looked about to find a suitable camping-place. In my search I was successful, for on the edge of the beach I discovered a cave with a clean, sandy floor, and an abundance of old drift wood within fifty yards of its entrance. One thing certain, I should now sleep dry, and have a roof over my head—two blessings that the dwellers within civilisation do not half appreciate, for all their lives they have been accepted by them as a matter of course.

Taking the shore of the lake as my guide, it was impossible to lose myself, so I followed its course to the westward, with the hope of obtaining some game. In this I was successful, for barely had I been absent fifteen minutes, when I came across a large flock of turnstone plovers feeding among the wash of the receding breakers. From the total disregard to my presence that they evinced, it was evident they knew little of my race. Thus I got within such easy range that, at one discharge, I knocked over sufficient of their numbers to last me for a day or two.

Plucking birds as an occupation may be all very well for a poulterer's assistant, but for a hungry man anxious to break his fast, it certainly is a confounded nuisance ; however, after half an hour's patience, I had denuded five birds of their plumage, the number I considered necessary to supply me with a good square meal. Each carcass on a stick, placed at an angle of forty-five degrees, soon sputtered and frizzled over the clear wood fire, and were regarded with the most zealous care and attention, and far earlier than they were ready, supposed to be edible ; at length I could stand no longer the savoury odours that arose, so fell to with such a will that the whole were soon disposed of. Without much coaxing I could have repeated this gastronomical performance, and only desisted from attempting it by belief in the old adage, "enough is as good as a feast."

The Bruin family are evidently numerous here-about, for scarcely had daylight disappeared when I heard an angry squabble, in which several appeared to be engaged ; but this did not deter me from sleeping. How and when I entered the arms of Somnus I know not, but of this I am aware, that the sun was high in the heavens when I awoke.

The scenery around me was remarkably pretty, recalling vividly to my memory often visited haunts on

the lower portion of Loch Lomond; but the distant hills were here wanting that add so much to the charms of that landscape. My position I discovered to be at the head of a large bay, girt in by abrupt irregular rocky cliffs of granite, fronted by a beautiful pebbly beach, and the water, now in a state of rest, glistening through innumerable twinkling diamond rays from its deepest blue bosom. In the offing were several islands, all densely clothed with wood, and reflecting large dark shadows, perfect photographs of the reality. "And can such a charming peaceful scene as this be unobserved by human eye?" I thought. No, it is certain that so fair a land and enticing water must long ere this have made the locality a favourite haunt of the Indians, for the Red-man, crude, ignorant, and superstitious as he may be, has a wonderful appreciation of all that is beautiful in nature.

While making arrangements for my breakfast—for I was engaged in the uninteresting pursuit of plucking some of the birds I had killed last evening—to my surprise a skunk, as self-possessed as if it was a domestic animal, walked past me, entered my dormitory, surveyed the ground, rug, gun, &c., and then advanced towards me. Cool assurance like this in a wild animal I never saw before; in a representative of any other race I should not have minded such con-

duct, but to have Mr. Skunk's society forced upon me, was decidedly disagreeable. To take my gun and blow the intruder to pieces was easy enough, but for two reasons I did not wish to do this : first, that the effluvia would have driven me to shift my temporary residence ; secondly, that ammunition was now too valuable. It is unnecessary to deny that a skunk is a remarkably attractive animal in appearance ; but, independent of possessing the power of producing the most fetid horrid stench, an even greater objection can be urged against it, viz., that, supposing it bites a human being, hydrophobia is certain to result. This circumstance has long been known in the United States and Canada, and therefore little surprise can be expressed at the war of extermination waged against them. Although the bite of the skunk has such a fatal effect upon the human family, it does not so operate upon dogs, for if it did there would soon not be a single one left in the agricultural districts, as the companion of man never loses an opportunity of worrying them, and seldom does so without getting more or less bitten. Believing in hydrophobia as I do, still I think that the number of persons that die from its effects are very much exaggerated, and further, that not one dog out of ten pronounced mad, and in consequence destroyed, is so.

When thinking on this subject it is difficult to pass by some of the absurd and antiquated ideas of the enlightened population of the present period. Thus the dog days commence in Midsummer, when hydrophobia (unknown in tropical countries) invariably shows itself in England early in the spring of the year. Again, muzzles of all descriptions, each out-rivalling the other in their inutility and powers of torture, are fastened upon Pluto, Bijou, or Cæsar, who, if possessed of the most even balanced brain previously, are certain to have it disarranged by being hampered with such an incubus. I have on several occasions witnessed an angry crowd of inhuman wretches bellowing with all the strength of their lungs, and throwing at the suspected animal every missile that they could lay their hands upon, pursuing an unfortunate dog. Such was but an evidence of the blood-thirstiness of our race, and the avidity with which they grasp an opportunity of giving vent to it, for the victims on each occasion I allude to had lost their masters, so anxious to discover them, and frightened at being deprived of their protection, performed their search in a hurried manner, when some fool or assassin advanced his belief that the poor creatures were mad; this was sufficient, the cry was taken up, when mobbed, beaten, and terrified,

the maligned were ultimately killed, after undergoing sufficient excitement to cause bipeds, let alone a dumb animal, becoming actually crazy.

But, to return to the skunk : it would neither go nor be driven away, the pleasure it derived from the smell of my cooking apparently overcoming all idea of fear, so as soon as I finished my meal I sallied forth, hoping my absence would induce it to change its quarters. After a tramp of half an hour I came upon the mouth of a splendid stream, which entered the parent lake by a channel cut through a regular wall of stone, the cliffs on either side being almost perpendicular and nearly nude of vegetation. In clambering along the rocks that margined its course, for I had now changed my direction inland with the hope of finding a ford, I had an opportunity of seeing a family party in all the privacy of seclusion—a sight so seldom witnessed except by the aborigines. It was in this way : I had ascended to the highest part of the rocks, and was carefully scanning the descent with the view of selecting the easiest route, when my eye was caught by the movement of an unknown object. In a moment I concealed myself, and from my hiding-place took observation, the reward being what I have stated. On a ridge at the entrance to a cave or deep fissure in the rocks was



situated a shelf twenty odd feet long by twelve or more in width. On this, stretched in all the ease of indolence, enjoying with greatest delight the warm rays of the sun, was an elderly lady bear, and by her side two youngsters, almost half grown. A merrier pair of young elves it would be hard to find, or two that required more keeping in order, or were more prone to take liberties with their parent. At the numerous absurd antics each cut it was impossible to help laughing, and when for some more than ordinary breach of filial respect the culprit would be seized by his dam, and then and there severely punished, under less unhappy circumstances I would have become convulsed. The energy that was exercised in securing the disobedient child inferred to a looker-on that murder was about to be committed; however, it invariably resulted in a few good cuffs, a make-believe worry, terminating by the fond parent dressing the fur of the captive, the maternal relative while thus employed being again and again interrupted by the other darling playing some trick upon her. With the exception of schoolboys, I do not think there are any creatures so brimful of impudence and mischief as young bears, and truly they lead their parents an anxious life; thus, I suppose, arises the origin of the saying, "as hard to lick into shape as a young bear."

These animals all appeared in first-class condition and health, the gloss of their fur telling the latter circumstance. Their principal food is doubtless vegetable, but unquestionably, when opportunity offers, it is changed for venison or fish. In capturing the latter an old bear becomes exceedingly expert; and, although possibly seldom observed by a white man engaged in this pursuit, the greatest practical naturalists, the Indians, frequently see them. So to the Red-man is due what I am about to narrate of Bruin's sagacity.

The shoals and bars at the *embouchure* of rivers and brooks are always favourite haunts of fish. The bear knowing this enters the lake some distance below, and makes a detour by swimming or wading till he reaches within a short distance of the stream's mouth. With cautious slow step this he approaches, driving, but not frightening, all the trout in front of him, which, when they have reached sufficiently shoal water for his purpose, he dashes among, and seldom fails to secure the largest by a dexterous move of his paw, after the manner that a fisherman would use a gaff. The Indian dogs, I have frequently observed, practise the same *ruse*, not single-handed, but in a party of several, their mouth instead of foot, of course, being employed to secure the prize.

The other method employed by Bruin to take fish is to place himself on a tree reaching over a shallow connecting two pools, and as the trout pass up or down the rivulet, hook them out.

But to return to the bears I had been watching. Having apparently devoted enough time to indolence, and each of the youngsters had sufficient of their mother's care exhausted upon them to perfect their toilet, all got up, and descended in Indian file the face of the rocks, doubtless with the intention of going to seek their mid-day meal. I can imagine the life of Bruin in solitudes such as this an extremely happy one, for rarely does he suffer from scarcity of food, and as soon as the weather becomes cold and boisterous lays up in some snug retreat, there to sleep undisturbed through the long and almost Arctic winter. In autumn, previous to their retiring to hibernate, they are invariably very fat, but, on recommencing active life in spring, their condition has very much altered for the worse.

Meditating whether I should not retrace my steps, I chanced to cast my eyes lakewards, and perceived in the distance—so far off that I had to gaze several minutes before I could distinguish what it was—a canoe. The intervening space between me and it was too far for any signal to be useful, so I anxiously

waited, hoping that the crew might point its head towards me; but in this I was disappointed, for it passed behind the western point of the bay, and was lost to sight. It, however, had scarcely been out of view many minutes, when I perceived another following in the wake of its predecessor, but, if anything, further seaward; it also soon was shut out by the intervening point of timber. Those who have sailed on distant seas out of the ordinary track of commerce, have doubtless experienced the lonely feelings that are generally produced from looking day after day over a deserted ocean. True, you have the wild sea-fowl, and possibly the leviathans of the deep, in view, and the interest their habits awaken, for a time amuse, but the same intense loneliness, if forgotten for an hour or two, will return with redoubled power. At length, after days, perhaps weeks, of watching, a sail is seen; with what inexpressible gratification you gaze upon it, for its appearance assures you that there are other mortals on this earth beside yourself—that no extraordinary convulsion of nature has occurred and destroyed the whole human family, excepting those embarked with you. Disappointed I certainly was to see the canoes continue their course till out of sight, but, at the same time, their appearance told the tale that others

of my race were within a distance possibly not over a day's walk, and consequently that there was a strong probability of my soon finding them.

Before returning to my sleeping-place of the previous night, I went down to a deep, still, sullen-looking pool, almost the last on the river before entering the lake; having selected a suitable wand for a rod, I tied my line to it, and, with a lizard for bait, commenced fishing. Soon I had a run, but, striking too sharply, my pole broke a foot or two from the top. If I had lost my hook it would have been a most serious misfortune; but luck stood by me, for as the tip drifted in the current, it jammed against a branch, which fortunately was within reaching distance. My fish and bait, however, were both gone. In a shallow connected by a narrow channel with the river I discovered a shoal of shiners. With a branch and some stones I cut off their retreat; but, although they were in immense numbers and confined within a space of twelve to fifteen square feet, so active were these beautiful silvery little fish, that they defied all my efforts to capture them, and that although the water was nowhere over a foot deep, and in many places barely six inches. With a landing-net I might have scooped them out in dozens; with a small-sized hook and diminutive

bait I might have caught them ; but neither of these were forthcoming. Thus my invention was brought into play ; first I tried to snatch them by rapidly drawing my large hook through their dense ranks, but the prey were not large enough for it to take hold of them. Having thus spent some time fruitlessly, a new thought struck me, viz., to drive them into shoal water and pelt their densest ranks with stones. In this manner I succeeded, and soon possessed half a dozen capital baits. Returning with my prizes to the pool, I recommenced fishing, and soon captured as many splendid trout, an invaluable addition to my larder. The improvement in the weather, the change of scene, the objects of interest I had seen during my walk, and my success in obtaining a change of diet, all acted favourably upon me, for since discovering that I was lost, I had not felt in such good spirits. In fact, during my tramp home, an inward monitor constantly kept whispering to me that the period of release was near.

The season was now so late that a fall of snow and cold weather might at any moment have been expected ; anxiously I prayed for its postponement, for the consequence to me would have been so serious that it was far from pleasant to think of. In fact, whenever I detected myself brooding over the possi-

bility of being snowed up in this lone land, I engaged myself gathering firewood, or replenishing the blaze ; in fact, any active employment that would check my imagination hatching up possible misfortune.

I seldom enjoyed a meal more than that I made off the trout I had this evening, and after such the spirits ever rise ; the weather, also, was all that could be desired, so I sat up late, and smoked my last pipe of tobacco, moreover, long familiarity with large extents of water, caused me to regard the vicinity of the lake almost in the light of the presence of a companion, so I did not feel so very, very lonely after all.

I resolved after to-night not to remain longer at my present encampment ; my reason for this was, that from its being situated at the termination of a deep bay, it was out of the track of canoes going up or down the lake. Thus I would push forward on the morrow, and, if possible, gain the extremity of some prominent headland, from which I would keep a sharp look-out during the day, and a fire, as beacon, burning on it at night.

At this season the Indians, I was aware, captured the principal part of their stock of fish for winter consumption. This is done after dark with the spear and torch on all the shoals frequented by lake trou<sup>t</sup>



and white fish for breeding purposes, so if from my next halting-place I should not perceive any lights on the water at night, I would change to another till I did, and then endeavour to direct my course by land as near as possible to their vicinity, in the hope that the report of my gun or fire upon the beach would attract the fishermen's attention.

Those that do not know the Indian in his native haunts, where, by their skill and assiduity in field sports, they obtain their support, can have no idea of the extraordinary precision and rapidity with which the Red-man handles a fish spear. Of all implements of fishing this is their favourite one, and from childhood upwards they are incessantly practising it.

There are two spearing seasons while the lakes and rivers are free of ice, the first early in summer, when trout and salmon are passing up the rapids ; the other towards the end of autumn, when the lake fish assemble upon the shoal gravelly banks to deposit their spawn. In the first the greatest amount of agility is necessary, so much, indeed, that a white man, although brought up in the woods, never can become the red man's rival in it.

I have often, when opportunity offered, watched their mode of proceeding, and, although placed at the

spearer's shoulder, never could understand how he sees his prey.

Let the reader transport himself in imagination to the margin of a rapid on one of the wild north-western rivers; if the position be beneath a fall, so much the better, for the game will probably be more abundant and the skill exhibited greater. Such a sight I have at this moment under my eyes, and on a rock barely covered with water and surrounded by quantities of foam dancing upon the rushing eddying current, stands an Indian attended by his squaw.

Have you ever in your wanderings by meadow or loch observed a heron fishing? Have you marked its eager intent gaze and firmly set figure? Such is exactly the look of the Indian; and seldom does his spear descend without transfixing a struggling fish. For hours at a time he continues his labour, never ceasing, except for the moment that his squaw takes to release the captive from the barbs.

Spearing on the banks at spawning time is more exciting, more enjoyable, and certainly more picturesque. In the canoe is a vessel composed of hoop-iron, in which a fire is made of birch-bark, fir cones, or pitch-pine; from the power of its ruddy blaze, the bottom becomes as clear at ten or twelve feet as if it

were only so many inches distant. In each canoe there are generally two occupants, the paddler and spearer, and during the density of a dark autumnal night tremendous is the havoc made among the spawning fish. It is a cruel sport, and one which, if carried to excess, would soon depopulate the most numerous inhabited waters, still it is wondrously fascinating. I have tried it, and enjoyed it, as success was my reward, the quick eye and quicker hand being not so much a requisite as on the rapids, for the prey seem lured by the light into a consciousness of security that enables you with trifling practice to strike them with certainty. Another attraction is, that this fishing takes place during the glorious still nights of autumn, and on the same shoal will be numerous canoes, the flame from each lighting up the sombre woods, while the voices and shouts of the participants wake the latent echoes.

I had scarcely laid down when my old acquaintance, the skunk, made her appearance, the smell from cooking evidently being the attraction. Watching the creature's movements without pretending to observe her, once she came so close to me that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my gun. Gazing intently into my eyes, and scanning my features with that half-curious, half-impudent counte-

nance animals often exhibit, she evidently thought, after mature consideration, that I was unworthy of fear, or too insignificant to provoke wrath. I felt obliged for the valuation she placed upon me. Before laying down, I had thrown the heads and bones of the fish into a heap: these Madame Skunk soon discovered, and doubtless considered she had found a treasure. However, instead of beginning the feast with greedy haste, she purred over them as if enjoying the meal in anticipation. But this was not the case; even skunks have some good qualities about them. The purring was a call, for soon she was joined by a pair of young ones, about as large as month-old rabbits. A mature skunk in its strongly-marked black and white coat and scrupulously-kept fur is a very handsome animal; but these little ones were perfect darlings, and what charming pets they would have made if domesticated sufficiently to give up using their teeth or scent bottle on all available occasions. The parent was not greedy, the choicest morsels she distributed evenly among her children, and, although thus engaged in parental duties, it did not prevent her keeping a watchful eye upon me. However, sleep stole over me, sound and refreshing was my rest, so that when I awoke day had broken, and my nocturnal visitors departed.

Fish first and plover afterwards, not a bad breakfast, I hear the reader say ; my appetite would justify any one in coming to such a conclusion, for even without salt or pepper, let alone other luxuries, I managed to eat an enormous meal. Such a consumption of viands in civilised life would have shocked a looker-on, and gained me the reputation of *gourmand*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

By following the edge of the shore, with the exception of an occasional clamber over rocks obstructing my course, I had, comparatively speaking, easy walking, thus, in little over an hour, I had lost sight of the thin wreath of white smoke that marked the fire of my last resting-place. My course was constantly intersected by rivulets, few of them large enough to carry a boat or canoe, and all exceedingly shallow at their *embouchure*. Off the mouth of each, as if waiting for the rains to increase the volume of water, were innumerable trout, all apparently as hungry as sharks, and perfectly indifferent to danger. If means of communication with civilisation were less difficult, there is little doubt that most lucrative fisheries could be established here; but time, doubtless, with the never-ceasing tide of improvement and emigration, will obviate this drawback, as well as convert the neigh-

bouring grounds into arable lands. The latitude of my position cannot differ much from that of London. Clearing off the wild waste of timber that now covers the country will, in my belief, modify the climate, and when such takes place, this will become as fine a stock-raising country as there is in the world. The soil appears too cold and hungry for wheat, but that is no reason that oats, barley, and other northern cereals will not flourish. The climate also must necessarily be humid, from the quantity of lakes and streams scattered over it, which will increase the probability of its suiting the cultivation of bulbous plants.

In years gone by, the Green Mountains of Vermont were the favourite haunts of innumerable moose; now they are the finest and most extensive sheep pastures of the United States. In its early history it became a fact so well known, that it passed into an adage, that the habitat of this wild game was suitable for the rearing of domestic animals, thus the following lines, possibly incorrectly quoted:

“ The upland and forest where moose are found,  
For sheep and cattle are the best of ground.”

Here, again, is an instance of the bounty of nature to the human family, for where the giant elk ceases



to exist from the encroachment of the white race, his place is filled by other food-producing quadrupeds. It, nevertheless, appears to me a great pity that this truly magnificent animal, the elk, should be doomed to annihilation, for, doubtless, it could be reared in a domestic state, when it would require far less attention than ordinary farm-yard occupants, and could be made to perform the double purposes now allotted to horse and bullock. It is a well-known fact, that they have been broken to harness, and that their speed and powers of endurance far exceeded that of any creature known; moreover, bad roads would be of trifling detriment to them; all must know who have seen with what ease they pass over the roughest barren, or through the densest timber land. Exposure also would not affect them as it does the horse, and a severe winter night passed out of doors in no way incapacitate them from resuming their labours on the morrow. Greasy heels, sand cracks, and the numerous other ailments to which the equine family are so subject when neglected, are, I believe, unknown to the alpine race; at least, among the numbers I have killed I have never seen any evidence of its existence. For ploughing, their immense weight and powerful stride would make them invaluable, always provided they could be made

sufficiently docile to submit to such monotonous occupation.

But why should such not be possible, for how patient has become the ox, yet the race from whence he is sprung when running wild in their natural habitat, or those that have escaped for a lengthened period from man's control, are as shy and wary in their efforts to escape, and as bold and dangerous, if called upon to exert their courage to avoid capture, as any other race. The elk, born of wild parents, might be difficult to divest of its inherent love of freedom, still kindness and proper handling would assuredly do much to reduce it; but their progeny of the second, third, or possibly fourth generation would become, doubtless, as patient of control as the most commonplace old motherly cow.

I made such good speed in my tramp, that, by the time the sun had become vertical, I was nearing the point of land that formed one of the promontories that guarded the entrance of the bay. On that account was congratulating myself on my success, when I heard the sharp, quick yelp of a wolf apparently running game; in a few moments it was repeated, several others chiming in. Knowing the propensities of this family, I doubted not that they were up to some mischief, so halted to listen; nor was I long detained in doubt, for within a hundred yards

of where I stood a young cariboo broke cover, and, with a rush, dashed into the lake, and with rapid, powerful strokes soon placed a wide extent of water between himself and pursuers. A few minutes afterwards three powerful, full-grown wolves came out on the beach, wistfully they gazed with longing eyes after their prey, but did not attempt to follow. No; previous experience had taught them how futile would be an attempt to capture in the water one of the very swiftest swimmers among quadrupeds.

The disappointed gentry not having seen me, I had an opportunity of observing them *au naturel*, and how wondrously dog-like they were in their actions. They had obviously had a protracted run, for all appeared much blown, thus a bath and drink of pure water were in great demand; so with legs stretched out at length, occasionally lapping the water with their long flaccid tongues, each did exactly as all who have shot frequently observe setters do after a long run. My course being past this trio, I did not choose to make a detour, so held it. The rustling of the sand and stones under my feet soon caught their ears, when they turned their heads hurriedly towards me, as if expecting the noise to be caused by the approach of game. However, my sudden apparition seemed in no way to disconcert them, for I was permitted to

approach within a very short distance before they deemed it necessary to retire ; indeed, so little evidence of fear did they evince, that I cocked both barrels, from a doubt arising in my mind whether they were not considering if I would not be an acceptable substitute for venison. When they did go, they looked dangerous, for there was that expression in their eyes often observed in animals that are inclined to dispute man's supremacy, a look I have frequently observed in an insubordinate hound whose temper had got raised from being deprived of his prey, or made rebellious through an excessive application of the whip.

Feeling relief at seeing, what I thought, the last of them, and to make them believe that they were held in thorough contempt, I hurled a rock after the rear-most, which but for his agility would have given him sore bones, nevertheless it had the effect of making him hurry up his previously lagging pace.

From a secluded pool at the mouth of a stream I flushed one of that rare species of water-fowl the king-duck, his large double humped head giving him a most ungainly appearance. I have always believed previously that this seldom seen bird was confined to the Arctic regions, and moreover was strictly marine.

Of course, all know that one swallow does not make a summer, so it would scarcely do, on account of a single specimen being found in a previously unknown situation, to discard the experiences of authorities. The eider-duck, equally a resident of hyperborean regions, has been known as far south as the English Channel, heavy gales doubtless being the cause. Some similar reason probably induced the king-duck to be so far from home.

I seldom in my previous experience have seen so many great northern divers assembled on one sheet of water, as upon this lake; look where you would, their large black bodies loom over the clear surface, causing them to appear double their size. Moreover, their wild startling shrill cry continued to be echoed and re-echoed from every tree and crag.

This unusual muster of these far from common birds, and their disposition to babble—for as a rule they are not prattlers—foretells in my belief severe weather, probably frost and snow, things of all others in my lonely position to be most dreaded. But may the loons be false prophets and myself a croaker—"sufficient is the evil for the day thereof."

Crossing the neck of a promontory that jutted into the lake, instead of following the coast line at a place where the brushwood was unusually sparse, I saw

a wolf. The distance between me and the animal could not be over seventy yards, still there was in the creature's manner no evidence of fear or distrust. His course and mine apparently were the same, and he evidently had as little intention of relinquishing it as I had. However, there was plenty of room for both, and I had almost dismissed the circumstance from my mind, when to my surprise I saw that wolf number one was followed by two companions, about twenty or thirty paces apart, and from their looks and manners that I unquestionably was regarded with considerable interest. Of course, one wolf looks so much like another that it is impossible to be certain, still I felt a very strong impression that these three worthies were the identical trio who had been disappointed of a feast on venison in the morning, and if such was the case, well, they were dogging me with the intention of screwing up their courage, when darkness shrouded the landscape, to make a preconcerted attack, so sup on a lost biped, as a substitute for the lost quadruped. Silly things, how little they were aware that I could at any moment have disposed of their lives; but without firearms my position would have been anything but pleasant. With a good club or axe, unless a man was attacked simultaneously or unawares, I think he would have little trouble in



beating off two or even three of these disreputable relations of the canine family. If I had not felt the necessity of husbanding my ammunition, I believe I should have knocked over one, that his remains might submit to the indignity of being torn and gnawed by his comrades ; for although the negro adage says, "dog no eat dog, no never," wolf will eat wolf, and that with such gusto that if a stricken one only be but slightly wounded, his fellows will hunt him to the death as a pack of hounds will a fox. This circumstance is worthy of Mr. Freeman's attention, possibly his philanthropic mind might suggest to the race a remedy for such blood-thirstiness.

Again striking the edge of the lake, I most unexpectedly secured my dinner without having to employ my gun, so saved a cartridge. It happened in this way. The water was extremely shallow, and into it projected a broad spit of gravel on which grew a very stunted and sparse crop of rushes. Several northern divers, unconscious that any danger would result from such a proceeding, had left their watery home to rest and sun themselves. In a moment my eye detected them, and knowledge of their incapacity to take flight when on shore, informed me that by a quick dash I might succeed in cutting them off from their favourite element. Rapid as thought I made



a rush ; the birds amazed seemed unconscious of my intention until it was too late to save themselves, so I singled out the plumpest—always the easiest to catch—and knocked it over with a stone. The chase finished I looked up, and not forty yards distant were the rascally wolves coming directly for me at a good three-quarter gallop. In a moment I dropped the bird, placing my foot on its neck to prevent it escaping, and cocked both barrels to be ready if it was necessary to stand on the defensive. Never were rogues so disconcerted ; with surprise as thoroughly depicted in their features as ever it was in mortal being's, each halted, looked foolish, and in a loitering careless gait slunk off.

Now these worthies doubtlessly thought, when I made the rush to intercept the divers, that fear was inducing me to run and thus escape their pursuit, so having a frightened creature to deal with, they would without further delay run him down ; but they had calculated without their host, as the sequel showed. If I had been some timid, unarmed person, I doubtless would have been pulled down, simply from the want of showing a bold front. More than once I have seen a bull that would pursue all who ran away from his wild look and hostile actions, quietly

walk off, even abruptly turn tail and bolt, when confronted by a determined person. I believe there are very few quadrupeds that will attack man if he does not permit his presence of mind to desert him, at the same time it is wrong to say that none will, so it would be most culpable to unnecessarily put yourself in peril by a desire to exercise it, but if placed in an unexpected position of danger, when other means of rescue are not within reach, your life may be saved by using it.

That I had not yet done with my attendants the wolves was evident, for after placing about a hundred yards between me and them, they quietly sat down upon their haunches and watched with evidently most interested motives my movements.

But to my prize, the diver; it was a splendid young bird, in most perfect plumage, weighing upwards of twelve pounds. I felt great reluctance to destroy its plumage, as it would have made a valuable addition to any museum, but "needs must," &c. Although this bird is universally called the loon here, the appellation is erroneous, this specimen being the Immer or Great Northern Diver (*Colymbus glacialis*), not the Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*); both species are, however, to be found in the same latitudes of America as comprise their habitat in Europe. Although report says that the

Immer has been known to breed in the north of Scotland, to my knowledge it has not been authenticated, while the loon unquestionably does on some of the secluded lakes of Sutherlandshire.

The red-throated diver (*Colymbus septentrionalis*), another of the same family, although far more common in Europe than either of the previous mentioned, I have seldom seen on the Western Continent, the reasons I attribute this to being that salt and not fresh water are its favourite haunts.

Although the wings of all these birds are extremely small in proportion to their size of body, they are capable of swift and protracted flight when they gain elevation, but their efforts to do so are awkward in the extreme. Strictly migratory, however, they never come in winter a great distance south of the ice line, and seldom at any season are to be found in numbers far from it. A few couple annually nest about the lakes in the north of the United States, but their great breeding haunts are on the edge of the Arctic circle. Although nearly all American web-footed birds that frequent fresh water are excellent food, these divers are not much "to crack up" on that score, for they ever possess a strong fishy flavour, far from agreeable to the majority of human palates; but beggars not being choosers I shall

accommodate myself to circumstance, so sup on my handsome prize, and be sufficiently grateful to thank the gods afterwards for what they have sent me.

Leaving the level of the lake by a gradual ascent of quite one hundred feet, I gained the long-desired termination of the promontory. It was a noble bold headland, with almost a perpendicular front, covered with immense boulders, and a few dwarfed birch-trees. From it projecting much further into the lake than any of the neighbouring points of land, and being far more marked in its outline, I felt little doubt that it was a recognised landmark of the Indians, and as such often approached, so that my chance of being rescued by a passing canoe looked far from improbable, thus for a hard day's travel, performed under very trying circumstances, being in a very unfit state to undergo severe fatigue, I felt deserving the reward I received for my exertions.

For a signal I was resolved to keep a large fire burning near the extremity of the point, so my labours for the day had not terminated, as fuel had to be gathered. If I had possessed an axe this would not have been either a long or very tedious job; but such not being the case, I had to satisfy myself with such dead limbs as I found strewn upon the ground, or green boughs of such dimensions as could be lopped off with the aid

of my hunting-knife. Thus it was late ere I turned in, when I was too worn out to be able to sleep. Moreover, an hour or two after dark it became exceedingly cold, which I felt the more from having selected a place entirely destitute of shelter. Further, I am not certain that it would have been a very safe performance to have permitted myself to doze, for the three wolves gave me indisputable evidence that they were still in attendance; if to-morrow they have not taken themselves off, I shall be compelled to take aggressive steps against them.

At length a faint line of light in the eastern skies denoted the approach of day and the termination of one of the most wearying and uncomfortable nights I could even desire my direst enemy to have to pass. With dawn the wind died out, and the surface of the lake, no longer fretted with its pressure, lay still, calm, and clear as molten lead, while the distant shores and numerous islands looked suspended in space. Although far from in a frame of mind to be pleased or imaginative, I could not resist gazing with admiration on the fair landscape, and thinking what future is in store for it, and what do you suppose my imagination can paint? A land teeming with a prosperous, consequently happy population, an integral part of the most powerful nation of the earth.

Although searching the water in every direction for over an hour, not a vestige of animal life could be seen save the loons asleep upon its placid bosom. I had hoped, I had even dared to expect that a canoe would be in sight, or a white wreath of smoke indicating an encampment; but, alas! I was doomed to disappointment, and might as well have been in an uninhabited planet as far as evidences of human life could be discerned. Possibly, physically I am not much weakened by this protracted detention, but my body feels cramped and stiffened, while my feet are in such a fearful state from bruises and chafing, that it is doubtful, even if it were necessary, that I could walk ten miles further; and worse than all, there was such an oppressive languor—an utter listlessness of purpose, accompanied by despondency, overwhelming me—that I even regarded death with feelings of indifference, so kept quoting, I fear almost in irony, “Oh, death, where is thy sting? oh, grave, where is thy victory?”

Leaving the margin of the water to gather fresh fuel for my fire, I spied the wolves on my return in its immediate vicinity, evidently looking up the *débris* of my last meal. My approach seemed to give them little uneasiness, true, they did not actually dispute possession; but they gave way with so bad a grace, that

it was only a question of time and a little longer acquaintance for them to do so, thus I determined to take the high hand, and make example of the most insolent. An opportunity soon occurred ; the largest of the trio, a powerful, well-made and clothed fellow, turned round after retiring a few paces and looking me full in the face showed his teeth, after the manner of a sulky, cross-grained dog. I thereupon pitched my gun to my shoulder, and aiming for the centre of his chest pulled the trigger. Almost without a struggle the creature fell, his life-blood choking his last respirations. After all, my ammunition was not thrown away, for I utilised a portion of the hide to tie around my suffering feet, the remainder being intended to temporarily supply the place of a mattress. The Indians frequently eat wolf—to dog flesh they are absolutely partial—so I cut off a hind-quarter and hung it out of the way of thieves, only to be used when my pantry ceased to be better provided.



## CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT mid-day, having failed to see a canoe, and retaining anything but an agreeable remembrance of last night's sleeping-place, I resolved to search for a more suitable one. As it was my intention to keep the fire burning on the point, it was not desirable to remove far ; moreover, as the neighbourhood was rocky and irregular there was little doubt that it would be easy finding what I wished in the vicinity.

In a ravine, the sides of which afforded shelter from the prevailing north wind, so consequently was well supplied with vegetation, and through whose bottom ran a beautiful clear rill, I discovered a cave. The entrance to it was almost large enough for me to pass through without stooping, and its floor was covered with beautiful white sand ; in fact, so regular was the formation and suitable the selection of the situation of this grotto, that it looked more like the

work of man than of nature. I cautiously peered in, but with my back against the light I could not distinguish its proportions. At first I hesitated to enter, but on after-thought felt rather ashamed at having even for an instant given way to what very much resembled fear, so pushed into the dark aperture. At first nothing could be done except grope my way, but after a time the eye became accustomed to the subdued light, and I was able to distinguish sufficiently far in advance of me to move forward with less caution. I must have been upwards of fifteen feet from the outer world, when this subterranean passage opened out into what appeared to me a vast chamber. Having visited the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky and other celebrated caverns, I was well aware of the danger an explorer runs of getting lost in such places, so I retraced my steps to procure some bark or other material, out of which to make a torch. Soon I sighted a patriarchal birch-tree, the lower portion of which I denuded of its hoary curling cover, and with it returned to complete my discoveries.

Gaining the point in the cave originally reached, there my load was deposited, and after several unsuccessful attempts ultimately succeeded in lighting, then to make burn up with powerful flame, the mate-

rial procured. Holding the torch aloft I had a clear survey of the interior; it was about twenty feet square, and but for the rugged walls and irregular roof might have been supposed a chamber in an ordinary dwelling. In one of the recesses, that next the entrance on the right-hand side, something caught my eye; at first it appeared to be part of a root, but on closer inspection, to my dismay, I may say horror, I discovered it to be the remains of what had once been a specimen of frail mortality. In a sitting position it reclined against the wall with the head shrunk forwards upon the knees and arms, and although only a portion of the clothing remained, the body appeared perfect. The skin had become of that nondescript brown colour, nearly resembling mahogany, and seemed to have shrunk to such an extent as to leave no room between it and the bones for flesh or muscle. Under no circumstances have I a liking for such sights, at the present time, with my body enervated and my mind depressed from my unfortunate position, I was doubly unable to endure it, still there came over me an inexplicable fascination that prevented my at once leaving the revolting spectacle.

From the uncovered head hung down a quantity of coarse long black hair, a rude stone pipe minus a

stem lay on one side, while an antiquated flint musket, with the stock so decayed as to look as if it would almost fall from the metal when touched, leaning against the wall, muzzle upwards, rested within reach of the mummy-like fingers. In a few minutes all this was comprehended. I do not think even then I should have left, had not the spluttering of my torch, and the rapid decline in the light it afforded, admonished me that if I did not collect my scattered senses and pull myself together, I should soon be entombed in darkness with the dead.

Ill as I had felt previous to this, doubly I felt so now, and could not help regarding the discovery as a device of the Evil One to show me what was to be my fate. At first, when I felt the fresh air fan my cheek on regaining the outer world, my inclination was to fly from the locality, as inhabitants do from a plague-struck city, but after-thought prevented my doing so; and the further I delayed the greater became my determination to look again upon the ghastly apparition, to learn whether violence, starvation, or natural causes had terminated life, and also obtain some relic that might trace to whom the unknown belonged; for although convinced by the hair, pipe, and gun that it was an Indian, yet I was

equally satisfied that alone, without a companion's sympathy or friend's attention, the soul had departed for the spirit land; for if it had been otherwise the body would not thus have been left, but deposited deep in the soil at the foot of a tree or overhanging rock after the manner of his race.

As an abundance of birch-bark was required to carry out my purpose, and there was none left in the immediate vicinity, I determined to postpone my search till the succeeding day, more particularly as I had still to find a suitable place to pass the night. Further examination of the ravine soon enabled me to discover another cave, in fact, the neighbourhood seemed to be perfectly excavated with these underground galleries. The one I selected was rather too open in front, still the entrance was well sheltered, the recess dividing off into two distinct passages twenty feet from its mouth. Here, with a fire at the entrance, I could not suffer much from cold, and be tolerably secure from marauders, while the loose dry sand would afford me a comparatively soft couch. Having collected a sufficiency of fuel I returned to my last sleeping-place to have my evening meal and a look out seawards. As I approached it, just as I expected, the remaining wolves were busy upon their late companion; already the carcass was torn in

pieces, and fragments of entrail and bone strewn around; the lesson I had taught them had its effect, for both gave me a wide berth, not very hurriedly it is true, for each carried with him a piece of carrion, but sufficiently so to announce that my proximity was considered dangerous. Without molestation or any attempt to increase their fears, for now they treated me with sufficient respect as justified my believing they would not presume to become too familiar, I did not wish to drive them from the neighbourhood, as in case of necessity I would be able to convert them into food.

Making a distinction, as man ever does, between reason and sagacity, placing the former far in precedence of the latter, with what ease could either of these animals find any place they desired, travelling towards it with equal correctness by day or night; while I, when without the sun for a guide, am unable to pursue a straight line. Yes, man may make what distinctions he likes, but he is ever too prone to elevate his own race to the detriment of the others. Human beings build their dwellings to suit their requirements, but the birds of the air do likewise; we garner our grain that food may not be wanting, when the earth refuses to supply it; the squirrel, the marmot, and many others do likewise. Birds migrate over

thousands of miles of land and water, yet periodically and with unerring instinct return to the same spot for many successive seasons ; while the lords of creation, although truly they find their ways about the earth, cannot lose sight of land, or trust themselves to the pathless forest or desert without calling to their aid the use of the compass. As in individuals of the human race, no two are alike, each having a specialty in his character, so among the quadrupeds and birds, all are gifted with qualities positively necessary to their existence, nevertheless these peculiarities are totally distinct in each race.

Gaining the extremity of the point, gazing with an intentness over a prairie of water that caused my sight to pain me, still not a vestige of what indicated the vicinity of human life was to be seen. As the atmosphere was clear and still, what an area could I cover, still not a canoe, not a wreath of smoke was in sight. I might have taken unction to my soul by considering myself lord of all I surveyed, but never did I feel more thoroughly that I would sooner be the humblest of a community than a king without subjects, let my demesne be as long and wide as the greatest empire of the earth :

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods ;  
There is a rapture by the lonely shore ;



There is society where none intrude  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

Very true, I agree with the poet, but these pleasures are enjoyed by contrast. I had now obtained so much of it that I longed most earnestly for a slight experience of the reverse side.

While watching, longing, waiting, a familiar little note struck upon my ear. At first I thought it fancy, but when it was again and again repeated, I turned round to see its producer. Yes, my ear had told me correctly, for after a critical examination I discovered the unexpected little beauty. If I had been in the pine-woods, its presence would not have surprised me ; but here, some miles from them, I was scarcely prepared to find it. For many reasons it deserves notice, firstly, from its scarcity in England, secondly from the startling dissimilarities its plumage appears to undergo, and thirdly, the tremendous power given to its peculiar shaped bill, enabling it to sever with ease the hardest pine cones to extract the seeds. Many naturalists advance as the reason that it is not more frequently seen in the British Islands is, because it breeds in winter and migrates north with the approach of mild weather. In such latitudes as my present situation I do not consider that it can be deemed migratory, although it certainly

appears far less abundant in moderate than severe weather. This I account for by its being extremely shy at one season and quite the reverse at the other. In spring I have frequently found its nest composed of the most diminutive twigs and grass, bound together with wool and hair, and beautifully lined with the latter. Its eggs also possess the peculiarity of varying almost as much in colour as the parents do in plumage. A typical one, however, may be described as about the size of that of the bullfinch, but rather more elongated, of a cream colour and white ground varying in places to a warmer tinting, while the larger end is numerously spotted with red, occasionally intermixed with darker colours. They are capable of sustaining a great amount of cold, appear to enjoy themselves very much in the snow; but when the earth is clothed in this garment, they are ever found associated in large flocks, the vicinity of a homestead or the margin of a clearing being then their favourite resort. My little visitor's tameness was not as acceptable as it would have been under other circumstances, for it predicted the approach of cold weather, a prophecy I did not want, as I was well aware it could not be far distant, and disliked being reminded that such was the case. As children sing to the lady-bird "fly away home," I might have

done likewise, but fear the advice was equally improbable to be taken. However, when the sun dipped and glomon usurped the place of its light, the familiar twitter ceased and I was again alone. The night became very dark and the winds breathless, so I did not suffer from cold, this inducing me to remain by my signal fire till a late hour. All this time I never shut my eyes, all desire to sleep seemed to have departed ; but memory was hard at work, recalling many scenes and days of youth long buried in the past. Travelling through the entire retina of boyhood ; one moment I was bird-nesting in the woods that margin Clyde, another climbing the ruins of ivy-clad Bothwell Castle, or again fishing for trout or pars along the rugged margin of the Avon, or watching the crows circling aloft over the rugged heights of Cadzow. Again the scene would shift to the banks of the noble Tay, Scone Palace, the South Inch, the Almond, with the birchen slopes, and rich meadows that surround it, for oft they had echoed my school-boy chatter of a Saturday afternoon, at a period when manhood and foreign lands were looked forward to with the thought that they were the realisation of the charming nursery pictures of fairy land ; but how different it has been found, I leave all to answer, for whether born in a hovel or in a palace,

with boundless wealth or sunk in poverty, sorrows and disappointments chequer the existence of all. Yes, such were my thoughts when a distant light, first faint, then gradually increasing, seemed to rise out of the distant waters. No *ignis fatuus*, no hallucination of brain, I felt convinced it was, and the further to confirm my belief others sprung up around the first seen; but, alas! they were miles away, and without a doubt were produced by Indians spearing fish, so how could I attract their attention. First I thought of my gun; the intermediate space was great, would the sound travel so far or the flash be seen so far away, and was it prudent to spend my trifling stock of ammunition when its value was more to me than gold or precious stones? No, the best plan was to keep the fire amply supplied, and make a blaze that would gleam over the waters for miles. My discovery had renewed hope, and with its return came strength and energy; bruises and ailments were forgotten, and I piled on the brush I had collected till the hungry flames reached aloft, but without more food they would die, so little caring for wolf or bear recklessly I rushed into the darkness, and by dint of tearing, breaking, and pulling returned with an ample load. How provokingly quick such small wood would burn, I learned this night, for no sooner

was one load brought in than another was required. Scarcely could I even steal a few minutes to watch the result, and learn if any of the unknown turned towards me; but after all there was nought to be gained by doing so, for the moment they gave up fishing to respond to me their torch would have been extinguished, and I should be in ignorance of their approach till their craft came within the glare of my fire.

My incessant labours caused night to flit by rapidly, and day at length broke; clearer and clearer it became, till the sun burst forth; and could I believe my eyes? could not, I might almost say, for I was alone, and not a sign of human life in view.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." For a few minutes I felt so; but the knowledge, the certainty that fellow-creatures were not far distant gave me fresh courage, and with it came the determination and power to have such a supply of fuel as would produce a blaze the coming night that would set the whole country-side in a low.

Being further determined to spare no efforts to attract the attention of any eye that might be turned this way, I went to the ravine, and cut a pole about twenty feet long; its diameter at the butt, although not more than six inches, gave me quite an hour's

hard hacking before it was severed. To the top of this I fastened my ground-sheet, and then erected my flag-staff, a beacon that doubtless could have been seen, from its elevated position, for many a mile.

All this labour over, I felt I had earned rest, and, giving way, thoroughly enjoyed it. Feeling convinced that my deliverance was near, I resolved to have another interview with the tenant of the cave, a final look at what circumstances will reduce man, the proud lord of the creation, to. Well provided with birch-bark, I entered. I thought I perceived a dank and unhealthy smell. Previously I had not observed it. The knowledge that it was a charnel-house possibly might have caused me to imagine such. But curiosity induced me to go on with a labour which certainly was not one of love. When the bark had sufficiently burnt up, I commenced my examination. Fragments of an old blanket-coat partially draped the figure. Without disturbing the position, I removed the covering from the chest, knowing that the aborigines invariably wear some ornament around the neck. Nor was I mistaken, for a small glittering piece of metal fell to the ground.

On examination, in the uncertain light of the



flickering blaze, I could discover no impression on its surface, for it was worn smooth as a coin that had long been in circulation. Feeling no compunction, I appropriated it. Among the sand, and close by the body, I exhumed an iron box, a well-worn rusty knife, also a powder-horn; these I took; but the gun, useless from its deep incrustation of rust, I left, for it was valueless to me, and a most fitting emblem to indicate the life the departed had led. But when will human eyes behold it? Long, very long, probably, is that time distant; and then it will possibly be those of an exploring white man, and not those of the deceased's own race, after the precursors of colonisation arrive here to set up their household gods.

To find myself in the broad stare of daylight again was a relief; but curiosity to examine my relics did not long brook delay. The powder-horn was not empty, but the quality was of the poorest description; the knife was such as is usually employed in the Indian trade, but without a mark to indicate where manufactured; while the little box was of that pattern which is usually employed by sailors—such a one possibly as Molly gave her lover Tom in the dear old charming song of “Wapping Old Stairs.” With a great effort I opened it—for that corroding fiend rust



had on it placed his stamp—when two flints, a steel pricker, and a piece of plug tobacco fell out. Small, truly, was the stock of this poor fellow's gear. Fancy spending life, possibly a long one, and sighing it out at last with no more worldly possessions! That he had met the white man was evident, and visited their trading posts yearly, or how could he be possessed even of these? Poor fellow! was he missed when first his absence was perceived, or was he, like thousands of others, regarded but as a machine, in whom no interest is taken when they cease to bring the supply that increases the trader's wealth? Truly, the poor Indians' is a sad fate, driven, year from year, further from the homes of their fathers, the wild game and fish—their staff of life—annihilated, and all this sacrifice expected to be submitted to without murmur or attempt to gain redress. But the medal I had forgotten. Close examination revealed it to be one of those given by the Catholic missionaries to their proselytes. What a burlesque must this poor descendant of the owners of the grand American demesne have thought the creed that taught him love, goodwill, and fellowship with those who, year by year, were despoiling him and his of their just inheritance! But the Indian problem is a painful mystery, which far wiser heads than mine have tried

in vain to satisfactorily solve. Certain it is that the two races, the European and original American, cannot thrive together, the prosperity of one being annihilation to the other. Thus the weaker must give place to the stronger; as becometh the faith you profess let their downfall be made easy; be gentle, be merciful, for they have suffered much.

## CHAPTER X.

FEELING tired, and much disposed for an hour or two's sleep, I directed my steps to the other cave for the purpose of having a nap; for I had resolved to pass the coming night watching, as I had far more hope of my signal fire attracting attention than the flag that fluttered from the pole. Having stretched myself in the most luxurious position, do what I would I could not drive out of my mind a longing to make use of the piece of tobacco I had so lately obtained. Although I wished to argue with myself that such was not the case, yet there is no doubt that I hankered after a pipe from the dead man's stock. Still there was something repulsive in the deed, and qualms of conscience arose on the propriety of doing so. But after all, it was as bad to appropriate it as to use it; the dead no longer required it, and I did—the necessities of the living had a right to take pre-

cedence. Never was a piece of plug tobacco harder to get a knife through, and when I succeeded the portion detached crumbled into dust; but all these minute particles were carefully preserved till sufficient were obtained to afford a smoke; not a bouncing big pipeful, as I could have desired, but sufficient to fill the top of the bowl, the bottom being first provided with a good foundation of birch twigs chopped fine. After a long sea voyage, or a sojourn in distant lands, on arriving on English soil, the first thing I invariably do is to call for a pint pewter of bitter beer, and the intense satisfaction from those draughts is long remembered; but the pleasure from this smoke afforded me satisfaction never to be forgotten. The familiar flavour, the circling white wreath that rose round my head, even the sight of the wooden bowl projecting beyond my nose, recalled happy memories, and softened down the loneliness of my position. To say that I felt reconciled would be wrong, but that I looked upon my situation in a much more hopeful light is the truth; and that grateful lethargy to the wearied that precedes sleep came, and I glided into the realms of unexplored dreamland. How long I had been oblivious to the affairs of this world I know not, when I was awakened by something rushing past me. In an instant I sprang to my feet; to

obtain a knowledge of the cause was but the work of a moment. The danger of my position, with equal rapidity, struck me, and to avoid it, felt that nought could be done to save myself, but struggle as man only can when life or death is to be the result. A she bear and her cub had made this cave their home. When I had appropriated it both had been out on a foray. The hurried entrance of the youngster had caused him to pass me before aware of my presence. So now I stood between a half-grown bear, whose outline I could just trace in the uncertain light, and the mature animal desirous of joining her progeny. That the young one would not muster courage to come back past me, I felt convinced; that the old one would attack me for intervening between them, I felt certain. There was only one enemy to dread; but in the contracted limit of the cave, where light was uncertain, and the foe of enormous power, there was much in such a conflict to fear. My gun, never now separated from me, was in my hand; each barrel held the life of a foe quite as formidable if properly directed; but then came the point, if my hand or eye failed, my knife alone could save me; but what were the odds against having an opportunity or power to bring it satisfactorily into use?

Remaining with the butt of my gun at my hip, I

felt for the familiar handle of my bowie. I partially drew it to see that it was loose in the sheath, then dropped it back into its place ; shorter far than it takes to tell was this performed, but not quicker than was necessary, for a whine of the young bear dissipated in a moment the parent's doubt, and in an instant she rushed upon me. In quick succession both barrels were discharged, the second appeared to check the advance of my foe, but before I could draw my knife—enveloped in smoke and sand—I was seized by the left shoulder and hurled down backwards, my head coming with fearful violence in collision with the rocks. At other times such a blow would have stunned me—thank goodness on this occasion it did not, or my earthly career must there and then have terminated. No, not for an instant did I lose my presence of mind. My right arm instinctively I forced across my chest, and the welcome handle was in my hand ; rapidly I disengaged it, and struck with all my force ; in contact with the shoulder blade it must have come, for it did not enter and was nearly knocked from my grasp. Feeling no pain, only as if held in a vice, I struggled to gain a better position ; but down on my face came one of the wretch's paws as if to crush my head into the ground, but it had not the effect, for the moment I felt its

pressure I seized the upper toe in my teeth with a grip that must have surprised Bruin, for immediately she made an effort to disengage it, giving me a chance, and into the chest just over the breast-bone again, again, again I buried my long blade; the hold on my shoulder loosens, again and again I ply the knife—there is a rattle, a gurgle in the fiend's throat, then a choking sob, followed by a stifled cough, and my face and neck are deluged with warm liquid blood. To gain the open air was my first thought; in an instant I had done so, and thankful I felt, for I had escaped from one of the most imminent dangers of my life, and doubly grateful I had reason to be when I found that I had not been maimed or seriously injured. That day I had seen quite enough of caves; nothing but extremely bad weather, I was resolved, would cause me again having anything to do with them, so with hurried step I hastened off to my signal station. Turning the corner where I had shot the wolf, to my surprise and delight I saw three Indians examining the fire and flag pole. So intent were they that my approach was unobserved; at length one turned his eye so as to catch mine, and with a yell he wheeled round, and followed by the others fled down the side of the bluff. Not to be deserted, I gave chase, thus sliding, slipping, jumping, falling, soon reached the bottom, where a



canoe was stranded. For their craft they at once made. Let them gain it they will be off I know, so I redoubled my exertions to overtake them. Some supernatural power was that day given me; never before or since have I exhibited such agility, for I overtook the Red-skins ere they embarked; but this mattered not, they would have nought of me, not even remain to listen to what I said, but dropped their vessel, which they had already laid hold of, and fled in different directions, leaving me its possessor.

What could all this mean? Doubtless that they had become seized with some unaccountable attack of fear. However, I had got their craft, and stick to it I was determined, for with its assistance I could find my way to where I had observed the lights of the natives who were spearing on the previous night. I was too much out of breath to shout after the retreating figures, so I stood panting and blowing like a broken-winded horse after severe exercise. Strange to say, the retreating figures never turned round to look; had they done so they must have seen that I was a human being, and more extraordinary still was their conduct, when I state that their guns, blankets, ammunition, &c., were all in the canoe, things that the aborigines value above everything earthly.

My fatigue and severe exertions had caused me to become very heated, a drink of water I was almost dying for, so stooped down to ladle some up with my hands, when, for the first time, I observed they were one mass of gore, my face I knew could be little better. This then must be the cause of their precipitous flight. They took me for some fiend in human shape, and preferred losing all to coming in contact with me. The Indians are marvellously superstitious, and if these men do not return and thus learn the groundlessness of their fears, till their dying day they will vow and affirm that they have seen the devil.

However, I have got their canoe, and intend, whether they return or not, that it shall be the means of my escape. Of course, if they will come and fraternise with me so much the better; but if they do not, then, although I have qualms that it is not quite the correct thing to do, I will start alone. If it were possible for white men to act in such a manner, I doubt if anything would induce me to desert them, for the probability is they would starve, or wander about, lost, in this vast country of forest and lake. Not so, however, with the aborigines, a day or two at most will take them to acquaintances, and although not possessed of firearms, by means of

pitfalls and snares they can obtain sufficient subsistence till they do so.

I should very much liked to have gone to the top of the bluff for my ground-rug, but desert the canoe, even for a moment, was not to be thought of; and as the canoe cannot be carried with me, the loss must be put up with, although a most serious one. Leaning over the gunwale inspecting the craft's various contents, I heard a step on the shingle. Looking up I perceived an Indian; he advanced slowly and dubiously towards me, then stopped. I addressed him. My voice seemed to reassure him, for he came on more hurriedly, again halted; for some moments we gazed fixedly at each other, and in that look I recognised a face I had seen before, his change of expression plainly denoting that the recognition was mutual. This Red-man was a frequent visitor at the old chief's camp, and spoke sufficient English to understand me. I explained what had occurred, when the habitual gravity of his race gave way, and he actually laughed; but he was prompt in action also, and set off without delay to overtake the fugitives. About dusk he returned with two.

All their fears had evaporated, still they looked ludicrously humbled at the contemptible figure they had cut, and so absurd did the whole thing appear to

me that again and again a tendency to give way to my mirth occurred. One thing, my following up these frightened creatures at the pace I did, was most fortunate, for if they had succeeded in escaping in their canoe, I feel convinced nothing would have induced them to return. Now that matters were so satisfactorily arranged our departure was postponed till dark, so all adjourned to the head-land to cook and enjoy a good meal. The pleasure I enjoyed at being again among human beings, and listening to the human voice, is more easily imagined than expressed; in fact, so much was I absorbed in contemplating the fortunate circumstances that had led to my release that for the time being I had forgotten the stirring and exciting events of the morning; but they were recalled by one of the Indians pointing to a rent in my apparel over the shoulder from whence protruded a piece of shirt saturated with blood. Then I narrated what had occurred, how I had been cornered in the den, how the struggle had been fought, and the result, those who understood what I said explaining in their dialect to the others. I regret to say incredulity was marked on all their faces, which became the more significant with my desire to dissipate it. The Red-man is too polite to tell a person that

he lies, but it is not always necessary to use such language to inform a person that you think he does. Thus springing to my feet, I offered to show them the scene. Even this was not sufficient, for they remained recumbent around the fire, chattering in their own lingo like a lot of monkeys; however, when I reverted to the meat and the excellent addition it would make to our meal, I commenced to gain ground, but the moment I mentioned the cub, and that I had not molested it, all sprung to their legs like one man, and would brook not a moment's further delay. The love of torturing the inferior animals is one of the worst traits in the Red-man's character. Thus I knew that the poor young bear, if made a prisoner, would have to endure every sort of barbarism that human ingenuity could invent before released by death. So I made up my mind, without saying anything on the subject, to give it a bullet on the first opportunity.

The cave was soon reached; there laid the mother stark and stiff as I had left her, while the child, apparently unconscious of the cause, was stretched at length by the parent's side. Alarmed at our presence the little one fled into the further recesses of the interior, and I trusted had effected its escape. But such was not the case, for when the carcass was

drawn out, the better to afford facilities for skinning and cutting up, affection for the parent returned with redoubled force to the child, inducing him to come forth and scan our operations.

One of the Indians ceased work, and glided among the rocks; his object I knew was to avail himself of the first opportunity offering to get between the cub and his retreat. So I delayed no longer, but fired, killing the luckless creature dead.

I could see my conduct did not give satisfaction, but when I pleaded ignorance of their ways, and no desire to participate in the spoils, harmony and good-fellowship were re-established.

The quantity of bear meat my new friends consumed at that meal, I would be afraid to say, for it really appeared impossible. However, it produced no other effect than loosening their tongues, and making them become most communicative. I have frequently noted this among savages, viz., that an excess of fresh meat produces a result almost the same as partial intoxication. Such an opportunity was not to be lost for obtaining further information on the cause of their stampede, for hitherto they had been rather reticent on the subject. Although impossible to repeat the narrative in language used, I will endeavour to give it as closely as possible.



“When fishing last night they had seen the light burning on the point, but thought it was caused by the bad Manitou who wished to tell them that he was angry with his servants for not having brought him an offering of fish before the winter set in.” Now this point had the reputation of being haunted, so never was visited except on such occasions as it was deemed necessary to pacify its evil guardian, and thus prevent him making their hunts and fishing unsuccessful, or throwing trees upon them in the forest, or enveloping them in storms when they are crossing the lake. Night not being deemed a suitable time to stop at the dreaded place, they resolved next afternoon, on their way back to the fishing-ground, to drop upon the margin of the bluff their propitiatory offering. On arrival, to their surprise they saw the pole and flag; this looked a little too much like man’s work, thus causing them to land and examine. So three came up to the flag-staff, while the other who was to have remained with the canoe, was attracted by the appearance of a martin which he had followed into the brush.

There is a tradition among the Indians that whoever sees the Manitou immediately afterwards dies; so when I was discovered the unfortunate who first sighted me called out what he supposed he had ob-



served, and his companions, not being desirous of having an immediate termination placed upon their existence, followed the example set them. Nothing, therefore, would have induced them to turn to look back ; the strange voice, and a knowledge that they were being pursued, was sufficient to make them resign all they possessed rather than return to where the Evil One had taken up his abode. The one who had given the false alarm explained how I was covered with blood, and how fearful I looked ; so, although chaffed by his comrades, still all appeared to think they would have done likewise. I carefully refrained from saying anything about the dead Indian, and having helped myself to his effects—for, knowing their superstitious nature, and the awe with which they regard the dead, I had little doubt that they would have deserted me, or found some pretext for refusing me a passage in the canoe.

It was dark when we embarked ; the water was without a ripple, and fortunately it was so calm, for, what with bear's-meat and myself being added to the load, the canoe was sunk so deep that the slightest sea must have proved dangerous. The heavy meal had not affected the crew, not even made them indolent, so the paddles were plied with such power and skill that we reached the fishing-

bank in about an hour, where already were assembled seven other crafts. Here two of the party left us, and got into other canoes, taking with them their respective shares of bear-meat; and I induced the others, much against their will, and not without promising a very large present, to give up their fishing for that night, and proceed at once to the old chief's camp. It is not surprising that so much coaxing was requisite to induce them to accede to my request when it is known that this fishing season lasts but a week or two, and on it they are dependent for a large portion of their winter supplies; further, although spearing is accomplished when a ripple is on the water, a calm night like the present was certain to reward their exertions with a very heavy capture. All the natives fishing here had heard of me; only two or three had seen me before, but the warm and affectionate manner with which I was welcomed told that I was regarded with the most kindly feelings.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE excitement of the day, the constant change, thankfulness for my delivery, had, all combined, caused me to forget myself; but as I settled down in the bottom of the canoe, with the hope of sleeping throughout the journey, severe pains in my head and shoulder reminded me that I was, properly speaking, on the sick list; and, worse than all, my wounds were so situated that I had the greatest difficulty in dressing them. However, one of the Indians volunteered his assistance, and a careful, tender nurse he proved. For wounds and abrasions there is nothing like cold water. Of this there was no scarcity; so, with a piece of wet blanket, thoroughly washed clean, on each of the ailing parts, I found such relief that, what between the charming cradle-like motion of the canoe and my exhaustion, I was soon sound asleep, only waking when we had reached our destination, a

little after daybreak. How welcome was the sight of the familiar wigwams, the pine-clad hills, the open ground, and hill-side that overlooked the camp, can only be known by those who have been placed in situations similar to that I had escaped from. For my rescue I felt intensely grateful, and did not forget, or feel too ashamed by the presence of others, to offer up thanks and praises to whom it was due. The first to meet me was the poor, blear-eyed old hound; the arrival of strangers brought him to the beach. After an inspection of us, I was recognised, when the old creature gave me a long, deep-noted welcome, that awakened in my memory a thousand thoughts of my far-distant island home. Once more I felt one of the world, that I still had a part to play in it, and that my future life was not always to be clouded with storm and shadow. But by this time every hut had given forth its inhabitants. True, they were nearly all females, for the men were away hunting or fishing, who gave me a welcome one receives who is supposed to have returned from the spirit world. The poor old squaw, the wife of the chief—she who had such serious matrimonial intentions regarding me—and her daughter Saucy, cried with pleasure as they again and again embraced me or kissed my hands, and, when they discovered that I was wounded,

expressed the greatest solicitude and gave every attention to my ailments. The first thing an Indian thinks of as necessary to properly welcome a stranger is to place before him food. The whole population vied with each other in this respect, and if I had possessed the digestive powers of a dozen, instead of one person, there would still have been an abundance, and to spare.

As I had not here the means of paying the two good fellows who had brought me thus far, who, now they had performed their mission, were most anxious to return to their fishing, at once, without a moment's hesitation took my promise, that as soon as they had time to spare to visit me at the shanty, I would scrupulously liquidate their claims. By noon their canoe was but a rapidly-diminishing speck on the bosom of the lake. May their labours never go unrewarded, and the grim spectre starvation never enter their wigwams; may their hunting-grounds long be unobtruded upon by the squatter, and may they never imbibe a taste for the greatest enemy of their race, the soul-debasing and body-destroying fire - water. The existence of people upon this part of the American continent is, I fear, short; may that fell time not come in your days, for truly, it would] be, a sad! and unjust reward to be driven

from the land of your fathers by the very race of whom you have just saved one of its members from death.

That all is not right at the shanty I am convinced, for there is a cloud of mystery, and a desire not to allude to it evinced, but this I trust soon to unravel, for after another day of rest I shall go there.

On a point covered with exceedingly lofty timber, not over a quarter of a mile from the encampment, is a rookery, if such a term may be used, of ospreys, a bird now seldom seen in the British Islands, but exceedingly abundant on this continent.

I induced one of the youngsters to accompany me on a visit of inspection to the place. Of course, at this season, eggs could not be expected, but the examination of a nest would be an ample reward for the trouble. The size of many of them was so great that they must have been the result of the accumulation of material for many succeeding years, thus assisting to confirm the belief that these handsome, noble birds invariably return to the same breeding ground if not driven off by intruders. This would not be so remarkable in Great Britain; but here, where by compulsion the osprey has to be migratory, and spend its winters thousands of miles to the south

of where it hatches, this circumstance is well deserving of note.

Young Red-skin, after a little coaxing, ascended to to the largest nest, and after exerting no small amount of skill and strength, succeeded in dislodging it. In its previously elevated position it appeared large, still I was not prepared to find it of such immense size. Without exaggeration the *débris* would have filled a couple of garden wheelbarrows; while some of the sticks were so large that it appeared impossible for the bird to have carried them up to the nesting place. The centre, however, was composed of very different material, the finest and smallest limbs of the birch being most skilfully wound together, the whole forming a cup about the size of the top of a man's head, lined most perfectly with hair and moss woven together. Although there were three of these powerful birds perched on neighbouring trees, they did not molest the boy, which they doubtless would have done had there been eggs or young. The hair at first surprised me, for no domestic animals exist within many hundred miles of here; but on examination it proved to be that of the moose, that is so bountifully supplied in winter costume to its withers and neck. It is very much, indeed, to be regretted that so many of the indigenous birds of



Britain are year by year getting scarcer, especially this one, for it is the least destructive to game of all the birds of prey. True, they will take any fish that comes sufficiently close to the surface to be pounced on, but the majority of these captures are sick or maimed, the loss of which is not so much to be regretted. On a salmon ford they doubtless, if permitted, could do much harm; but then, if the fishery was valuable, they could be easily warned off. The eggs of the osprey, of which two are generally to be found in each nest, are about the size of those of ordinary domestic fowls, very round, cream coloured, blanchd with deep rufus spots, the markings being much darker and more numerous at the upper or larger end.

One foe this bird possesses, and one which evidently is much feared, viz., the bald-headed eagle, who, like a coward as he is, watches the hard-working osprey till he has secured his prey, when with rapid pinion he swoops upon him. Sometimes the struggle will be protracted for minutes, when the shrill cry of the osprey will be heard as if begging not to be deprived of his food, but all in vain, solicitation is thrown away upon the bullying coward, and fear for worse consequences induces the fish to be dropped, which is frequently seized by the free-

booter before it has reached the water. I know no more interesting sight than to watch one of these battles, and whenever I have witnessed them, the days of hawking were recalled, with babbling spaniels, neighing palfreys, gorgeously dressed attendants, gallant knights, and last, though far from least, lovely damsels. But from the days of chivalry and the age of romance, let us return to the wild, wild woods of a land whose discovery scarcely dates so far back. Having this Indian lad alone to myself, and thus no sage old heads to wag an admonition of silence to him, I availed myself of the opportunity to do a little of what is familiarly designated pumping. My kindness had gained the youth's confidence. If I had understood his language better I should have learned more; however, this I became certain of—Antoine had returned and was at the shanty. How about my property was the first thought, the second was a determination to regain it at any cost, and that I feared would not be small.

That evening I attempted to bargain for a canoe to take me round, but all efforts were futile, they were either away or unfit for the journey, or there were no men to paddle me. There was possibly a great amount of truth in this, but nevertheless I could imagine a desire to prevent my going,

but when I stated my determination to walk, the secret came out, that Antoine would be certain to kill me. The story of two Irish citizens of the great Republic discussing equality occurred to me. The one stated that "one man was as good as another," the other coincided, but added, "True for you, Pat, and sometimes a deal better." So I was determined to see if I were not the better one. As usual I was not permitted to start alone. The old lady found she had pressing business there, and, of course, her daughter must accompany her, then two other aged women suddenly discovered they must see their husbands who were with the old chief, for that veteran had been there for some days. It was a queer *cortége*, still I found them very useful, for the path was familiar to all, and I was released from the pressure of carrying my ground-sheet and other extras—no small consideration in my present weak state. When we had arrived within a mile or so of our destination, I took the van, at the same time not forgetting the precaution of seeing that my gun was in a fit state to do most effectual service, for I believe Master Antoine capable of perpetrating anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter, if it would serve his purpose. At length the clearing came in view, in a few minutes more we had entered it, where we were welcomed by the shrill

voice of half a dozen curs, foremost and most vociferous among whom was the faithless Poteen. Contrite, indeed, he should have been at my travel-soiled state, and humbled himself in the dust, or exhausted himself with fawning to make up for his villanous conduct; but no, he did not even give that trifling reparation, but even had the insolence to go further, turn a deaf ear to my voice, and treat me as an honest dog at home would the veriest tramp. No more faithful, true, and affectionate race of dogs exist than pure bred colleys; but a drop of bad blood had given this creature characteristics exactly the reverse from those possessed by his ancestry on the mother's side. But this Babel of yelps soon brought out nigh a dozen dusky children of the forest to learn the reason of the turmoil, foremost among whom was Cariboo. My companions he at once recognised; but it was not until he had cast his eyes a second or third time upon me, that fairly yelling out the old familiar appellation "Capen," he jumped towards me with the agility of a wild-cat, closed his arms about my waist, and, in his excitement, gun and all, lifted me off the ground.

His joy was carried to such an extent that it made him act like a child instead of a man, so I had to repress it to prevent his making himself ridiculous.

At length we reached the shanty. The old chief and Sugar were summoned; in a moment both came, and what between the veteran's welcomes and oft-repeated shakes of the hand, and the lad's joy, indicated by a diamond drop in the corner of each eye, I felt assured that I was no ordinary favourite with both. Housekeeping on Indian principles had not improved the appearance of my dwelling internally or externally, for all indicated confusion and neglect, still my property was safe, a matter of far greater importance, and a conclusive evidence to me that the Red-man, however much it is the custom to abuse him, is capable of honesty and sincerity when kindly treated. There was so much to hear and so much to tell, that I determined to postpone our conversation to another occasion on the plea of feeling fatigued. So the room was cleared of visitors, and orders given that no one on any account was to be admitted till I had rested.

I had scarcely laid down when an angry altercation ensued outside; there was no difficulty in recognising the voices of the speakers. The first was Antoine, insisting on being permitted to enter, the other was Cariboo, supported by the old chief, refusing to allow him. Although the applicant was positive, there was an earnestness in the denial of the other that told truly that my sentinels were determined to use

force if necessary to carry out my orders. This little episode assured me that whatever should occur, I had friends ready and willing to stand by me in any emergency that might occur.

Two hours' sleep, a thorough good wash and complete change of apparel, made me feel quite a new man. So I issued orders through my two aides-de-camp, that I would hold a grand pow-wow in the afternoon under the birch-tree, so long employed as a boat-house. Such occasions as these are great events with the Indians; they delight in forms and ceremony, for it gives them an excuse for exhibiting themselves *en grande tenue*. The aborigines around me are, to a certain extent as to their raiment, Europeanised, thus preventing the display of feathers and paint characteristic of the tribes whose home is on the great slopes that verge upon the Rocky Mountains, and from this reason their taste runs in beads and trinkets, handsome furs and cunningly wrought belts of intricate patterns formed of brilliantly stained quills of the porcupine; and very noble they frequently look, unless when a desire to become attractive induces the happy owner of a chimney-pot hat, or other equally out of place piece of European costume, to be worn by them, which gives an absurdness to the look of even the most



sedate, that is likely to convulse the beholder with immoderate laughter ; however, we had no such exhibition, so that I retained my gravity with a fittingness worthy of so great an occasion.

At the appointed hour I proceeded to the rendezvous, where all were assembled seated on the ground in two lines, the chief occupying the apex of the angle where its sides joined, a vacant place next him being left for me. As I took my place each bowed his head forward, and remained with it in that position for several seconds. Then ensued a silence of some minutes, when all appeared to be wrapped in thought and gazing into vacuity. This being over I arose, and in as few words and simple language as I could command, narrated the events that had occurred to me and what lead to them. When any part of my discourse struck them as exciting, each exclaimed "Ugh !" But when they heard that I had passed some time on the point, which all well knew and thoroughly believed haunted ground, a perfect shower of "ughs" greeted me. At length I sat down amid a profound silence which lasted many minutes. This being the Redman's manner of indicating the seriousness with which they regard your communication, and that it is worthy of grave consideration.



At length the old chief arose, his erect figure, soldierly attitude, and keen determined eye, made him a study worthy of a sculptor. Throwing his brilliant blanket loose, and raising his hand as if to invoke power to express what he wished to say, figures of celebrities of ancient Rome, clothed in the honoured toga, were recalled to my mind. Like a true orator, without being guilty of untimely hurry, he spoke, and although occasionally I failed to catch the meaning of an expression, such force, such earnestness, such suitable gesticulation, and such impressiveness I have seldom listened to. The purport of his words was nearly as follows :

“So few good white men come among us, that when I heard of your arrival I was sad and my people grieved with me ; but when the Indians that brought you here told us how well you had behaved to them, we said all the pale-faces are not bad, for are they not of the same race as the missionaries, and possibly this stranger is like unto them ; and when I came and saw you, and found that you did not drive me off or spit upon me as if I were a dog, but answered my questions, and treated me with the respect a son would his old father, my heart warmed to you, and day by day and morn by morn we learned to love you more, for not only did you respect us but fed us.

When I heard you were gone, that since your departure day had passed into night and night into day, I sent the young men to search for you, and when they returned with the dog, all believed you dead ; for while there is life a dog will not leave his master, so we grieved for you as if we should see you no more. But you are again with us and we are happy, and when you go to your own people tell them that Indian not all bad unless when white man have made him so.”

And the old chief sat down amid numerous grunts of approval from his followers.

While this grand pow-wow was taking place the weather had suddenly changed, and fitful gusts of wind moaned through the trees or swept in eddying currents along the river course, gradually increasing in frequency and force, till all indicated the rapid approach of a severe autumnal storm. At length large drops of rain commenced to descend, affording an excellent pretext for breaking up our meeting. I was too tired and my mind lately too much overworked to entertain guests, and my dusky friends seemed well aware of what importance rest was to me, so with consideration worthy of the most civilised, let me depart to enjoy my own society. True, Master Sugar, with cat-like stealth, would steal in and out of my abode in the performance of his duties ; but it was done so noiselessly as almost to be imperceptible, more

particularly as the howling of the blast, the muttering of the deep-voiced, awe-inspiring thunder, the rushing avalanche of descending water, and the creaking, rending, and tearing of trees formed a chaos of reverberations so terrible as drowned all minor sounds.

I have witnessed the elements lashed into fury by a cyclone in the Indian Ocean, I have been in the surging vortex of a typhoon in the Formosa channel, and for a day and night, on board a powerful steamship, unable to advance against the winds, but rather to retrograde, from the uncontrollable force of the gale, have pitched and tossed off Quileparte in the Chinese Sea; but they were as skirmishes of a rear-guard in comparison to a great battle, when compared with the present raging of the hurricane. At an unusual burst of the storm-wrath, my little attendant whispered in my ear, "The Great Manitou is angry with his children." "Amen" was my response.

Athough on the American Atlantic sea-board the gales that occur in the same latitude as my present residence are protracted, often lasting several days, seldom less than twenty-four hours, except the season be summer, this storm did not, but relapsed into a death-like stillness more suddenly than it had sprung up, and that before it was many hours old. It is difficult to account for this, but however in-

explicable the cause, it is fortunate that it is so ; for what would be the destruction to the vegetable world if such spasmodic bursts of wrath were protracted ? Are we again to recognise in it a wonderful interposition of Providence to prevent so gigantic a section of country becoming uninhabitable to the animal creation ?

I have often heard it stated, possibly the first person that advanced the subject did so in joke—but how frequently do words spoken in jest come to earnest ?—that the safest place a person can be in during a tornado is the cabin of a well-built steam-ship. This I verily believe to be a fact. Timid dames and sea-sick swains will scarcely coincide with me, for they see danger of the craft that bears them being thrown on her beam ends at every roll, of going head-foremost into the ocean depths at every pitch, or foundering under the pressure of every spray that breaks over her bows ; but persons who have not a prejudice against marine travel, if they will fairly consider the matter, or refer to statistics of loss of life by tempests on the ocean, on board our first-class lines of vessels, not of course among our miserable coasters, or, more unworthy lumber-ships in the Quebec trade, than which no greater coffins exist will discover that my supposition is not erroneous.

## CHAPTER XII.

As I was smoking my after-supper pipe, and studying over plans for my departure for civilisation, a knock was heard at the shanty door; in answer to my permission to enter, the latch was raised, the rough-constructed hinges creaked, and in a moment after Antoine was before me. His manner and expression left no room for doubt that his intentions were peaceful, for he held forth his hand, and whining piteously, sued for forgiveness for past transgressions. I am not one to forget and forgive in an instant, but slow to be provoked and rather unrelenting in my wrath when feeling that I have been unjustly dealt with, so I expressed surprise at the line of conduct he had adopted, but my apparent determination to keep him at arm's length, only made him become more subservient and cringing.

After some minutes he asked when I intended

returning, which, when I answered, he reminded me of my agreement to take him back with me; further, that he would assuredly die, and if not a natural death, be killed by the natives if I deserted him, and if such took place after he had warned me, I should most assuredly be guilty of murder. Previous to this, for I had foreseen that such a turn might occur in the course of events, I had determined that nothing should induce me to permit him to accompany me, but my heart now relented, so I acceded. Knowing well I would not break my word, the interview soon after terminated, and I was again alone, but not long; for the Indian boy, who had seen Antoine arrive, dreading that his intentions towards me were not amicable, had at once gone for Cariboo, both of whom, doubtlessly, had played the part of eaves-droppers during the greater portion of our conversation. Affection for me and a desire to protect me was their sole motive, and by the motive not the act I judged them.

Since my return I had not exchanged a dozen words with Cariboo, so I invited him to his favourite seat, and soon learned much interesting matter that had occurred during my absence. To commence at the beginning, when my not returning at the specified time had excited his alarm, he had at once gone to



the lake to have a consultation with the chief on what steps should be taken.

The Indians, ever prompt to act, determined at once that the old man and one or two of his people should take possession of the shanty, so as to protect my effects; while Cariboo, the boy, and another of the tribe would ascend the river till they reached my first camping-place, and from there commence their search for me. This they did, but beyond finding a track on the sandy bank of a brook which I had forded, they were unable to make out my further trail. At length, disheartened and exhausted from their tedious labour, they were about to return to the shanty, for they were on the barren not many miles from it, when to their surprise they were joined by Poteen, weather-stained and gaunt, moreover, so frightened, that he would not leave them for a moment. This they considered a very bad omen; so after fruitlessly spending a few hours inspecting the vicinity, they returned, and just in time to frustrate Antoine, who had unexpectedly made his appearance, his first action being an attempt to appropriate my effects under the plea that he was my relative, and that although we had quarrelled, yet he was the proper person to take charge of them, and see that they were handed over to my heirs.



The specious and earnest pleading of the scoundrel, moreover his having with him several Indians, who had assisted him in bringing from the interior a large stock of furs, almost had induced the old chief to give way; but Cariboo's eloquence and earnestness turned the tide of popular opinion, when a war of words ensued, ultimately resulting in my supporter vowing he would shoot the first man that dared to touch the smallest trifle of my property. Soon after a disturbance took place between the French Canadian and his followers, for they had been promised payment for the sundry peltries placed in his hand, on arriving at my dwelling. Thus Master Antoine found himself between two stools, so considered it better to submit till time or opportunity were more in his favour. But he was not yet out of hot water, for one of the Red-men that accompanied him had deserted, supposedly with the intention of communicating to his people the result of their fall trade and the manner they had been swindled out of its proceeds.

I now regretted that I had granted permission to the blackguard to accompany me back, but having passed my word, there was no retracting; on this point however I was resolved, that if any complaints were brought to me, and substantiated, of his having dealt dishonestly with the aborigines, I would not only refuse to permit him to leave with me, but throw

every obstacle in my power to prevent the result of his dishonesty being brought out of the wilderness ; for it is villains such as this, through pilfering, cheating, and perjuring themselves, cause these simple-minded, honest-intentioned, chivalrous people to regard the white-faced intruder with eyes of suspicion—even with worse, hatred.

I do not deny that the whole white race, as a nation, use the poor Indian badly—drive them from the home of their progenitors to a country that knows them not, and possibly banishes them further when they have commenced to individualise themselves with their new residence ; but then it is done by fairer means, and for the benefit of society at large.

Too excited, too tired, and my body demoralised from bad treatment, I could not sleep, but tossed and fretted through the livelong night, building up plans for the future, or demolishing previously-constructed edifices. Excess in all things is to be reprobated ; in eating, drinking, or exercise, the human frame is like a piece of steel ; so much it will bear with impunity, but go beyond it and injury must accrue. But of all the fancies that passed through my brain, one that took firm hold, and would not be contradicted, was a resolve to turn my face homewards as soon as it was possible to arrange my affairs. What affairs had I to arrange ? I hear asked. Well,

part with everything that was not absolutely necessary to assist me in my journey, for here they were of value, in civilisation of comparatively none. So when breakfast was over I sent for the old chief, and communicated my intention. As I anticipated, his first endeavour was to persuade me to remain; but when he saw I was resolved in my purpose, he willingly promised to do all in his power to assist me. Although time was of the greatest importance, I determined nothing should be done too hurriedly, so named the date of commencing my homeward journey seven days hence, in the mean time requesting my old friend to send to his people, and all those Indians who resided within easy access, and notify them that I would trade away the surplus of my supplies for such furs as they were willing to dispose of on the day previous to my leaving.

If a white man had been situated in his place, he would not have performed my behest, for he would at once have perceived that competition would be the result, and thus the value raised of what was most valuable for him to possess; but well I knew no such selfish motives would actuate this worthy old chief, so rested satisfied that everything in his power would be done to serve my interest. Within an hour three young men were secretly dismissed upon this errand,

but, although the chief had been enjoined to keep silent to all others in the camp, I found that this was requiring more of him than was in his power to comply with. The fact was, that the old gentleman had no secrets from his better half, for he was hen-pecked as much as any civilised husband, and what he was disinclined to tell was extracted from him either by fair or foul means. This is not stated on surmise, but from actual observation, for on more than one occasion I have seen the partner of his joys and sorrows, if she deemed from her lord's manner that something was being withheld from her, wheedle and caress him into making her a confidante, but if this failed reproaches and indignant protestations would follow, accompanied by expressions of grief and anger, that invariably resulted in the squaw gaining her point. Women, although they be red or white, live in palaces or wigwams, wear paniers and chignons or dress in buckskin, are much alike if a point is to be gained, and their husband is the instrument to be employed to reach it.

Thus I was congratulating myself on the success of my interview with the chief, and thinking how perfectly I had succeeded in keeping my departure secret for at least some days to come—for no one was present at our interview—when the old lady and her

handsome daughter appeared at the threshold of my residence. Courtesy, of course, made me bid them welcome, and request their entrance into the room. One look told all, but for fear that I might be in error, which I felt convinced I was not, in the most careless and nonchalant manner commenced talking on every subject that formerly had been of interest in the broken dialect most comprehensible to them. But both mother and child had a settled, moody, disappointed look, that all my compliments and determined agreeableness of manner would not banish; so if an answer was vouchsafed me, and that was only on occasions that it would have been downright rude to refuse—a monosyllable was the response. Both were evidently got up, regardless of expense, for the occasion; the old woman had on her showiest beads and other ornaments, with her most brilliant blanket across her shoulders, while the younger had her hair carefully brushed and thrown back over her shoulders, her neck bare to her bust, while on her bosom glittered one of my earlier presents; her feet and ankles to the knee were covered with new moccasins and leggings beautifully embroidered, while over all was worn a double-breasted half-coat half-dressing gown, made from a scarlet blanket, and secured at the waist with a belt of many-coloured

beads. Think as you will of such a costume, but I say, as far as I am a judge of female apparel, that this unsophisticated child of the forest looked exceedingly handsome, and more becomingly draped than if she had had the benefit of a Parisian or a London dressmaker. At other times I should have complimented her on her appearance, now I deemed it too dangerous to do so, for a certain flash from the corner of her sloe-black eye reminded me that I had seen such indicate that, well, say if in a horse, that it was about to kick over the traces. A child in bad temper is often thoroughly restored to good humour by the gift of a toy, so I resolved to put into practice the same *ruse*. Searching among my odds and ends, I found a brooch and ear-rings, such as are frequently to be seen attached to cards, and exhibited for sale at the fearfully modest price of one shilling a set. With the bauble I approached her, diffidently, I must say, for I did not feel quite certain how it would be received, and tendered it.

With a suddenness that took me by surprise she sprung to her feet and snatched it from me, then dashed it to the ground, and stamped her foot upon it, grinding it into the earth with her heel. To express astonishment was not my purpose, so I gazed at her with supreme nonchalance. And a handsomer figure,



or more commanding well-bred looking woman, though her skin was dark as a double-dyed gipsy, I never gazed on. Speak of fire flashing from eyes, it did literally; her thin nostrils expanded, while her bosom heaved and fell like the waves of ocean. My independence, I could observe, severely piqued her, for from the Juno look she first exhibited, her features altered to an expression of severe pain. I said nothing, asked nothing, but simply gazed at her. At length she broke down, staggered back, and rested against the wall, her head bent forward and buried in her hands; but no tears flowed, all that denoted life being the heaving of her half-stifled respiration. It would be wrong if any one for a moment supposed that I was not truly grieved for the poor girl, but what could I do, for any action of condolence or words of regret might be misconstrued, and thus in future only add to the severity of the ordeal she was now enduring.

To leave the wigwam I first deemed the better course, but, on after-thought, supposed it might be considered an insult; to remain was but to witness grief resulting from an excess of feeling, which I did not wish to see, for with all my apparent indifference I felt keenly for the poor untutored child of nature, whose fault was to love too strongly; but fortunately the very interruption occurred that was



most desirable; the old chief with stately formality walked into the cabin. Anger, so seldom seen there, was in his eye, for his first words expressed that his belief was that the women had betrayed to me his weakness in making them confidantes. Waving his hand and pointing to the door, he ordered them to leave, and when his wrath was aroused not even the partner of his bosom dared to disobey. In a moment the old lady went forth, defiant in look and unwilling in manner it is true; but not so his daughter, whose attitude still remained the quintessence of listless despair.

The old chief did not understand her non-compliance with his mandate. Rage, at what he supposed disobedience, marked his face, and he was stepping towards her, doubtless with the intention of dragging her forth, when I intervened. Glancing at me with surprise, he remained stationary; in a moment more I had led him out, and the poor girl was alone with her grief.

The old gentleman's equanimity was soon restored, when I told him that the women had said nothing of my intended departure, but listened with sad face to the narration of what had occurred. After a pause, looking on the ground he said:

“The red squaw wither in the white man's home,

like the leaves before the winter wind ; no more would she live without the wigwam and the canoe, than the moose without the forest and barren."

Shaking the good old man's hand we parted.

I was truly glad this affair was over, and that it had terminated so satisfactorily, for it would have been a serious matter if the father had been like-minded with the old lady ; and there was further room for gratification, that no one but the members of their own family were aware of what had transpired.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SINCE my return I had not fished, and deeming it a good excuse to get out of the way for a few hours, I called the Indian lad and bade him bring my fishing gear. It was so long since it had been used that I suppose he found some difficulty in laying his hands upon all the paraphernalia, so I reached the pool I intended commencing at some time before he came up. While looking about me, my eye rested on a dear little familiar friend, one I have known from childhood, for it is found on both sides of the Atlantic; the bird I allude to was the common creeper (*Certhia familiaris*). Shunning observation, it is a diffident, gentle little creature, possessed of a wonderful faculty of gliding out of sight, or presenting itself without the observer being aware how it has gone or come; and the rapidity with which it shifts round the trunk or limb of a tree, one moment

with its head up, at another looking downwards, must be a matter of astonishment to all who are unacquainted with the formation of its feet and tail. I have said it is diffident; well, it possesses a strange anomaly of character, for it is so at one time, at others the reverse; it will approach so close as to be within ten or twelve feet of you, if its curiosity be excited, still ever manages to keep a twig or branch between it and the intruder in its haunts.

Whether there is a difference between the American and English varieties, such, for instance, as exists between the snipe of the respective countries—one or two feathers more or less in the wing or tail—I am not sufficiently expert an ornithologist to state, but to the casual glance they are exactly similar.

The nests of those creepers which I have found in England have invariably been in a diminutive hole in a tree, those in America outside, but screened from observation by some obstruction or excrescence in the bark. This may result from their deeming that intrusion or discovery is more improbable in less populated wilds of the latter land.

On the shell-bark hickory, one of the handsomest of trees, and one I often regret is not indigenous to Britain, is one of their favourite building places, but it requires no ordinary eyes and diligence of

search to discover its tiny little nest of finest withered blue grass interwoven with moss and lined with liliputian feathers. Its eggs, which generally number seven, are a white ground with light-brown or chocolate markings, more in the form of irregular lines than spots around the larger end, the lower extremity being occasionally entirely free from colour, or very slightly speckled.

The mature birds are capable of standing great severity of cold, for often, when deer shooting in the bitterest weather, they have kept frolicking about my stand, or followed me in my trudge through the woodland. However, they must be partially migratory, for I do not think they can pass through the severity and length of a winter in such high latitudes as my present position.

It is generally admitted that persons who reside in mountainous countries are superstitious; those that dwell in and on the margins of forest lands I know are; thus the backwoodsman will tell you, if he observes a creeper feeding with his head down, that it is no use searching for deer that day, and *vice versa*.

But here comes the boy.

"Why, sir, such a rueful countenance?"

Although convinced he did not understand my

question, he answered it with deep grief marked on his face.

“Capen, I fall and break rod.”

“Well, no use being in such a stew over what was an accident.”

And the poor fellow's visage brightened at once. What was the use of being cross? Have I not done the same with my own rod, and, doubtless, with my father's before I owned one? On examination it was a fracture of the tip. A few minutes, with the aid of my knife, a splice was made, and in a short time further all was as secure as previously. There is nothing like learning to be useful. If I had not, my fishing for that evening would have been lost; further, try and never lose your temper when an accident occurs, and, above all, when such takes place, particularly if a child be the cause, speak gently, for their feelings have not become hardened like ours through buffeting about in the rough world, and a word harshly spoken, even thoughtlessly, makes often a painful and long-lasting wound upon youth.

I found, as I expected, the water in splendid order, with possibly a little more wind than was desirable. This caused me to mount a larger fly than I should have done otherwise, but soon my choice proved itself correct, for at the second cast I hooked, and

afterwards landed, a splendid fish, and ere I reached the shanty, Master Sugar had quite a load.

Is it not strange, since I have returned Poteen scrupulously avoids me?—even deserts the boy when he is in my society—consequently I inquired of him the reason.

“Dog the same as man—he do bad, he too much ashamed.”

Well done, youngster, you are no mean observer of nature, Red-skin though you be.

Among the Indians there was a regular pow-wow this evening, for one had captured a black fox, the most valuable of all the fur-bearing animals of this region. The pelt is in prime condition, and consequently will make the fortunate possessor of it richer by one hundred dollars, taken out in store-goods, the intrinsic value of which will not exceed one-third that amount.

Russia and China are the countries to which they are exported, where I am informed only the highest nobles are permitted to wear them. What an extraordinary world we live in. Only fancy a poor little beast, that roamed at large over the Canadian wilds, living as best it may, and being regarded by the rest of the beast creation, yes, and possibly by itself, as a very ordinary creature, gracing with its



skin some pompous, overgrown, purse and learning proud mandarin, or a stately-miened handsome military prince of the Muscovite Empire, in either case thousands and thousands of miles from where the animal that produced it first saw light.

The night was so calm and still that after supper I wandered forth to listen to the anecdotes of the Indians, and smoke a pipe with them. To my surprise I found two of the young men preparing for a spearing excursion on the ford below where the canoes were generally beached. I must confess to having had a strong desire to prevent such unhallowed means being employed to capture the splendid fish of what I regarded as my own river ; but why should I interfere, in a week I should be gone, when the natives could do as they chose ; moreover, they were but following the instincts of their race, and the examples set them by their progenitors through successive generations. Food also was required, and under such circumstances even dislikes as strong as mine have a right to be waived. So I said nothing, and from the distance surveyed the scene, and it was one to be looked at, one to be admired, and, more, never forgotten.

Talk of romance, it was romantic in the extreme ; of wild grandeur it came up to all the mind could

imagine. The frail, buoyant, birch-bark canoe, the two muscular dark-skinned Indians, stripped to the waist, both standing erect, the one skilfully plying his long paddle, the other gracefully poising his spear, the whole lit up with the fierce lurid blaze of the birch-bark torch, the water surging round the craft, the surface of which breaking into a thousand ruby lights, while the glare, beyond the quaint old trees that margined the stream, made the distant darkness more impenetrable and forbidding. Deep and stealthily the paddle is dipped, skilfully and quickly the spear is struck, and the rising, struggling victim, momentarily held aloft before being thrown into the canoe, reflects a thousand lights from its silver-sheened sides. The deep "ugh!" of satisfaction from the performers when a more than skilful stroke was made, the echoes again and again repeating the applause of the lookers-on, the excited features, and doubly-excited manner of all, might have caused the observer to imagine that the river was in Hades, the spectators inhabitants of another world.

To spear fish upon a spawning-bed is wrong, unequivocally wrong, but never have I seen, never will see, I think, an exercise more manly, more inducive to skill and courage, more able to produce fearless and perfect boatmen, more attractive from associa-

tion and accessories. But as Antoine joined the group by which I was surrounded, and I had no desire to give him the slightest pretext for renewing my acquaintance, I reluctantly retired. On my way to the shanty I passed the camp where the old chief's family had taken up their residence. Over the glowing coals, now nearly burnt out, sat the two females of his household. The old woman, save that she smoked a very short and dirty pipe with such strong and rapid puffs as made her cheek inflate and contract with the regular stroke and rapidity of a bellows, looked like Hecate. The younger, her head enveloped in her garments, reminded me of many a sad creature seen upon a London door-step. Alas! where can we go not to find sorrow? where bury ourself, never to see grief? They are inseparable from man's lot. Sorrow and pleasure are to our life what sunshine and storm are to the vegetable world, and the palaces of the rich are no freer from it than the cabins of the peasant.

Another day has passed, and but five more remain ere (God willing) I shall leave this neighbourhood, probably for ever. For ever! What a mysterious expression! how definite, yet how incomprehensible. To think of it without sadness is impossible, still I cannot forbear the pleasure of associating once more

with my own race, and enjoying their society. To bid adieu to all the familiar scenes that surround me, that have become hallowed to my memory through frequent association with them, that have afforded me indescribable pleasure, that have witnessed my triumphs and disappointments in the chase, that have charmed the eye with their gorgeous foliage and hoary veteran trees, that have soothed my mind to rest and induced contemplations from which I have invariably arisen feeling benefited, and possessed of more charity for my fellow-labourers in the vineyard, that have recalled the merriest days of youth and the happiest of manhood—no, I cannot, will not depart without bidding them a fond farewell. An interview with Cariboo settled the point; with him as companion, I shall start to visit the beaver-dams on the morrow, and, if the weather continues fine, prolong our stay for two days.

Ruthlessly awoke from the pleasantest and most enjoyable portion of my sleep, that which occurs about an hour or two before the habitual time of rising, by all the Indian curs, and particularly Poteen, making a most discordant disturbance, was it surprising that I exclaimed “Confound the dogs!” and possibly wished each of their owners had strung them up before leaving their homes to bringing them here.

And to this turmoil was added the shrieking of squaws, imprecating the brutes for their bad behaviour, while every now and then a howl of pain would tell how skilful the female population were in the use of stones or other missiles. Determined not to be curtailed in my rest, I turned over and tried to sleep again. This I would doubtless have accomplished had not I detected several voices, in half-whispers, discussing the propriety of awakening me. It was evident that there was a difference of opinion on the subject, consequently the argument waxed warm, and the language louder. My lad and Cariboo protested against the step, while the others, who were evidently in the majority, insisted that it was time for all to be up, especially those calling themselves hunters. Under such circumstances, however much I desired it, sleep was impossible ; so, making a virtue of necessity, I left my couch. One soon learns to be expeditious in dressing when leading a primitive life, so I was not many minutes before becoming presentable. The cause of the disturbance was the arrival of the Indians who had rescued me from what I had christened the haunted promontory, a fine sensation name for a blood-and-thunder drama. Of course a hearty welcome was subtended to them, and they appeared as gratified at

seeing me, as I was to meet them. Without delay, they were invited to enter, and offered the seats of honour, but chairs or stools were not necessary, but rather the reverse to my visitors' comfort, so they declined occupying them with many a laugh and grin, ultimately selecting the bear-skin as a couch. My clothing, boots, gloves, fur cap, and especially my hunting paraphernalia, evoked their admiration, but my watch, compass, and some photographs, especially those of ladies, caused them to become mute with astonishment.

Their curiosity gratified, Cariboo, whom I had asked to officiate as master of the ceremonies, as well as to assist me unravelling such parts of their language I did not understand, got into a long, and evidently most amusing, conversation with the duo, judging from the expression of all. It was a description of the flight on the occasion of their discovering me. In the mean time I had given the boy instructions to prepare a feed upon a grand scale; but that my departure was near I should not have been so lavish of my stores; and as Master Sugar could not get on without my superintendence, I left my guests to be entertained by my henchman. Preserved soup, lobster, and bacon were the delicacies; a roast piece of venison and trout made into a chowder,



seasoned rather highly, and thickened with crushed biscuit, the stand-by. The old squaw from the first voluntarily assisted me, and after a time her daughter gave a helping hand, and the odours that arose around our out-door cook-house were most gratifying. From the shanty being so contracted in size, and always gloomy from the want of proper windows, our feast was to be *al fresco*.

The party was small and select, the old chief being the only invited guest, so that we should sit down five in all, myself at the head of the table, a guest on each side of me, and Cariboo and the old gentleman next each of the strangers. Like all housekeepers, I had my troubles, the most important of which was how we were to succeed for a relay of plates, for if more than one was used as a dish—half a dozen being my entire stock—some person would naturally be short of this necessary article. But a little thought showed me how to escape from the quandary. We should have birch-bark dishes, each description of food be served separately, and after it had been done justice to the plates gathered, soured in boiling water, wiped, and thus immediately again be ready for use. The soup, again, was a source of sad embarrassment, for the supply of spoons was limited to three, unless tea-spoons be included, when there were six; but they are not quite suited for the demolition



of soup while it retains its heat. Having spoken to Master Sugar on the subject, his invention served me ; for out of birch-bark he made a couple of scoops, big enough truly to hold half a pint of soup, but still useful in their way, when the chief object they were intended for was to transfer hot liquid from the plate to the mouth. The Indian lad knew well how to wait on me, so giving him such instructions as to attend exactly to what I told him, shut his ears to conversation, however amusing, and on no account permit himself to be hurried or become nervous, I dismissed him.

Doubtless my guests, in the goodly company of Cariboo, received some idea from him of what was the cause of my so frequently deserting them ; still the inherent politeness of the race induced them to make no remarks, or, I believe, even look after me to ascertain the prospects of having a satisfactory meal, but this did not prevent them enjoying a cup of coffee—more sugar than anything else—and making an awful inroad into my tobacco. As the steaming, spluttering, bubbling pots indicated that the time approached when their contents would be ready for consumption, with strict injunctions to the cooks that on no account were they to be permitted to boil over, I visited the old chief, told him the programme, and

on our way to the shanty begged of him to explain to the strangers what white men's ways were, at the same time giving them the hint to do as he or I did. Having introduced the old gentleman to my visitors, I called out Cariboo, and gave him the same instructions, sending him back to impart them. I enter into these minutiae to show that successfully to carry out a dinner-party, especially among guests such as I had to entertain, it was as necessary to use finesse, and be acquainted with details, as it is for a general before he can acquit himself creditably in handling a large body of troops.

Having explained the rotation with which I desired the various viands to be served, believing it would not tend to elevate me in the eyes of the lookers on, I retired to the river instead of to the shanty, to put the finishing touches to my toilet. My ablutions completed, and my beard and hair arranged in presentable shape, I once more visited the kitchen to give final instructions, with further information that nothing was to be served till we had taken our seats at our respective places. Believing all the machinery in working order, I adjourned to the shanty, there made a short speech, interrupted much by its interpretation, and more than half misunderstood, then invited my guests to adjourn to the banquet.

Getting one of the strangers on my arm while the old chief took the reverse flank, followed by the other under the guidance of Cariboo, we reached the dining-table, at least so I will call it, and took our seats. This was accomplished without disorder—an augury of success.

The lobster came first; each was abundantly served, but none commenced to eat the unknown substance till I set an example. Duly explaining what it was, all commenced work, and satisfaction was expressed on every countenance. Taking up a phial of cayenne pepper, I assisted myself to a small quantity, placing it on the edge of my plate. This was not unnoticed, for first one of the strangers, then another, did likewise, and with no sparing hand; the consequence was that in a few minutes both were in a profuse perspiration, ultimately followed by coughing and choking, so severe, that I feared for the result. A white man would have become red under such an ordeal; my guests became blue. Water was imbibed in an unlimited quantity, and the tears fairly coursed down their cheeks, but not a smile dared I permit myself to show. At length time gave each relief, when the first question the elder asked me was, whether such powder as that would not shoot better than what the traders sold the Indians?

I explained that it was not used for that purpose ; however, he insisted that it have “ plenty more fire than powder Indian get.”

In due course the lobster was removed, the plates washed, and soup placed upon the table. My shallow metal plates were scarcely suited for such a liquid substance, but then needs must. The lad, Sugar, had served extremely well ; but it is no easy matter to carry liquid in a shallow dish, and, as ill-luck would have it, he emptied the whole contents of one over the head and face of the stranger next me. It was nearly boiling hot when I served it ; doubtless, it had cooled a little before the accident occurred, still must have been far from an agreeable salute.

With the exception of an interjection of “ugh !” the unfortunate recipient of the salute said nothing, although he shook his head like a water-spaniel after a protracted swim, and an evidence of pain exhibited itself for a moment in his countenance.

This was the last *contretemps*, all afterwards went admirably, and when the last course was removed good-fellowship beamed on the countenance of all, and they yawned, stretched themselves, and patted their stomachs with the complacency of a civilised gourmand, certainly with less ostentation than can occasionally be seen among our City fathers—much

to the admiration of the uninvited, who stood around envying their lot, and regretting that they were not among the guests. At length the time for smoking came, the outsiders were invited to partake of the luxury, and bore that position in respect to the originals of the feast as in England is occupied by those receiving late invitations, that is, to arrive in sufficient to get the probability of a chance to have a worry at supper. However, here, whatever might be felt elsewhere, no jealousies were exhibited, possibly being under the eye of their chief was the reason, for all went merrily as a marriage bell. The scene must have been intensely picturesque and novel to those that were ignorant of such a life ; eight or nine swarthy warriors reclining upon skins in every conceivable attitude, attended by their squaws in their party-coloured garments, handsome trees shading off the warm, rich rays of the autumnal sun, while the bright sparkling river rushed past in all the glory of its mad headlong career. The tongues of all had become loosened, and narratives of adventures by flood and field, jokes and anecdotes, were the order of the day, when a shout from the bank by the boat-house instantly brought all, excepting myself, to their feet. In a moment afterwards every one, even the squaws, were rushing headlong to learn the cause of

the summons. My curiosity being excited, I followed the example set me. On reaching the crowd, I was not long kept in ignorance of the reason of the stampede, for half way up the reach was advancing a large canoe, under the united efforts of four powerfully-handled paddles. Each of the strangers, arms and necks bare, stood up to their task, and made their deep, powerful stroke with the precision and regularity of a well-trained crew. Although the current was not slow, the light-draught canoe slid over its surface with a speed truly surprising, so that in a few minutes more their craft's head was pointed to the beach, and in a moment after they had disembarked.

Who are they? was my first question; and, in response, had answer from half a dozen mouths that they were from the tribe where Antoine had spent the summer.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THEY were all extremely fine specimens of the Indian, young, active, and well made; one in particular, who stood almost six feet in his moccasins, and who appeared to be both leader and spokesman of the party, had a singularly handsome face, and most intelligent cast of countenance. It was quite apparent that I was known to them by report, for, after the old chief had given them a few words of welcome, they turned to me, holding out their hands to be shaken in a manner that indicated that it was a mode of salute, although known to them, seldom practised. Hospitality being deemed the superlative duty of all in these distant wilds, they were forthwith invited to eat—an invitation that was promptly accepted. Fortunately a large portion of our feast was left; to this was added some fresh fish, and the manner the stran-



gers stowed away the provender indicated that they had been lately on short commons.

Much too familiar with the character of the aborigines of North America to expect any information from them till the inward man was satisfied, I waited patiently for them to finish. If patience is a virtue, I certainly possess one, and on this occasion it was severely taxed. At length all desisted—the cessation being caused, in my belief, from their inability to contain more food.

After a short conversation between the old chief and the handsome brave, all of which was unintelligible to me, the latter rose, and in a short and energetic speech—interpreted by Cariboo—stated that they had welcomed a stranger among them; that he had gained their confidence, ultimately obtained their furs, under the promise of paying for them when he reached here, and that he had broken his word; the result of which would entail misery on his people during the coming winter, as it was probably now too late in the season to take them to the nearest trading fort, which was many days to the north of their home. Their furs, or the goods promised them, they were determined to have, and hoped that neither the Red-men that surrounded them or I would assist Antoine if he refused to do them justice. On the spokesman resuming his seat, I had a consultation

with the old chief and Cariboo, both of whom at once, without a moment's hesitation, supported me in my resolution not to shield the aggressor, but use every effort to force him to do justice to his victims.

Antoine and the Indians who had arrived with him, had established a camp about half a mile up the river; there he had his purloined treasure stored, and as he had not been seen all day, or any of his attendants, who were members of the same tribe as the new-comers, he was probably unaware of the proximity of the storm that was ready to burst about his shoulders.

At length the four strangers rose, and accompanied by two of our people as guides, left. Although I felt reluctant at their departure, fearing that blood would be shed, I deemed it better not to interfere, but let events take their course, so for the time being dismissed the matter from my thoughts.

My two rescuers had not yet been paid; as they were desirous of departing for home as soon as possible, leaving the coterie who had dined with me, reinforced now by the squaws and one or two more of the old chief's people, I went to the wigwam to procure the necessary articles to remunerate them with, adding to them some trifling gewgaws.

Truly, the Indian is a child, for when they beheld these useless additions, their tawdry brilliancy eclipsed

in their eyes the value of the useful portion of their recompense. After explaining the uses, no short lesson, to which brooches, ear-rings, &c. were to be put, we all sat down to a final smoke and cup of coffee.

Conviviality was at its height, each was explaining and telling the other how mutual was the pleasure their visit had afforded them, when distant voices attracted our attention. Turning to see its producers we learned that it was the Indians returning from Antoine's—the majority of whom carried a load. "Well, this is better than anticipated; the Frenchman has thought better of the matter and given up his ill-gained possessions." Such was the impression that passed through my mind; but on the new-comers, now reinforced by their three companions, joining us, the erroneousness of my surmise was speedily explained, for my late *employé* being absent fishing or trapping, the Indians had at once taken possession of the property misappropriated by the Frenchman, and without delay brought it here for transhipment.

I urged the expediency of their using expedition; but no, all I could do or say was useless; the attractions of a final talk, a farewell pipe, and a proposition that I should trade with them, were too great to be resisted, so all gave way to the two former plea-

tures. Not to embroil myself or allow it to become possible that I had taken any interest in their affairs, I persistently refused to entertain any proposition in reference to becoming the possessor of their furs.

Half an hour might have so passed when Antoine, excited almost to frenzy, rushed among us. The baggage seemed to be the first object his attention was directed to; but the Indians in a moment sprang to their feet, intervened between him and it, showing indisputably that they were prepared to do battle before they would submit to be again deprived of it. His courage no one could gainsay; even with such odds against him, I believe he would have accepted the gauntlet; but by chance he caught sight of me, and I suppose for a moment thought that I could be made useful in settling the affair amicably. But although he used every oath his vocabulary contained, gesticulated, and argued that all was his, honestly his, pleaded, prayed, beseeched me to stand by him and help him to "wipe out the whole boiling," I refused to interfere unless he could satisfy me that he had come honestly by them; but this he could not do, for he possessed absolutely nothing when he left me excepting what I had loaned him, and that was not one eighth part sufficient to purchase the valuable furs he had obtained.

Finding his persuasions and entreaties vain, he now heaped upon me the vilest of abuse, called me coward, skunk, dog, and then politely invited me to come into the open and fight it out. To such a modest proposal I also refused to accede, but this he stated did not surprise him. After a pause, in which he had moved further from me and the Indians who were clustered round me, he recommenced his tirade :

“I was in collusion with Indians to rob him, I had assisted them to take his furs from him that I might have them myself. No, he was d—d if I should.”

And with a rapidity that appeared impossible, he drew his revolver and pressed the trigger. Instinctively I saw his aim was true, so threw myself to one side. The movement saved my life—but next instant a second barrel, less correctly aimed, but sufficiently accurate to graze my side and arm, was fired. From behind me a shrill scream rent the air; I turned to know who was the unfortunate—to my indescribable grief it was the old chief's daughter, who, poor child, so severely was she stricken that she now lay upon the ground weltering in her gore.

I did not wait to know if I was further to be made a target, but sprung to the luckless creature's side, as all seemed petrified by the misfortune and incapable of action. The old chief on his knees moaned with an-

guish, and in a few moments looked as if he had aged as many years. Never till now did I know the depth with which he loved his handsome, wayward daughter. Still, no assistance was forthcoming, the emergency of the occasion causing me to feel that I was justified in acting, so I tore her dress apart at the neck, drew it back over her right breast, and there discovered a livid spot, slightly marked with blood; but, alas! trifling as the wound appeared, well, well I knew the probable result to the bearer of it.

Obtaining assistance we raised this forest flower and bore her to my shanty. On my couch we placed her, and although her tongue moved not, her lustrous eyes, now flushed with pain, spoke a thousand thanks. Giving the mother-in-law what instructions I deemed necessary for the patient's comfort, I stuck my revolver, freshly loaded, in my belt, and a ball cartridge in each barrel of my double gun. I felt as I went forth that possibly indirectly, still I had something to do with this poor Indian girl's misfortune, and fear very much, although to shed human blood would to me be a deed I never could regard otherwise than with horror, that if the cause of this sad episode had been within range, I should then and there have done my utmost to slay him.



Outside I found an angry assembly awaiting me ; the excitement of the moment which had swamped their powers to act had passed, and all believed it their duty to assist in securing the would-be assassin. My appearance among them armed told that I was of their mind, so I was welcomed with sincerity, if not with demonstration.

I could not help inquiring, for I knew that several of the Indians were in possession of weapons when the sad affair occurred, why they had not shot him down? From none did I receive a direct answer, but have little doubt that the colour of the villain's skin was to what he owed his safety.

For myself, when the fracas took place, I was not armed with aught but my knife, and although I feared the vindictiveness of the man's character, until he declared himself hostile—and that was done so suddenly—I disliked to go or send for my firearms. But where was the blackguard now? After firing the second shot he had fled towards the canoes, and no one having attempted to stop his flight, by this time was doubtless several miles down the river.

Master Antoine little knew the unfaltering sleuth hounds he had provoked to pursue him, or I believe he would have amputated his fingers ere he would



have permitted one of them on such an occasion to press a trigger.

As in all matters where the Anglo-Saxon is associated with the half-civilised or barbarous inhabitants of a country, I was at once looked to as commandant. In favour of the old chief I would gladly have waived my position, but the poor old fellow was fairly beside himself with grief. Nevertheless, he would not be left behind; but true to his patrician lineage, volunteered to occupy a subservient place in the cause of justice.

Delay is so often defeat, that I urged expedition. In a few minutes we had provisions for seven days in one of the canoes, and ammunition for the capture of a stockade in our pouches; but I could not go without bidding the poor girl good-bye, and giving further instructions for her comfort. My knowledge of surgery is but limited, still I know what will give relief to a sufferer placed in such a strait, so I re-entered the wigwam. My presence by her side was immediately detected, and although no welcome was accorded in words it was in looks. I took the almost pulseless hand in mine; in the arm appeared no power, while the skin felt dry and feverish.

Wiping away the blood that soiled her lips, I ex-

plained to the old squaw that this was not to be neglected, that perfect quiet was to be enforced, and that when the patient appeared faint she was to have a few spoonfuls of some weak brandy and water. A drowsiness had now stolen over the victim, so I slipped away, harder in heart and more unforgiving and unrelenting than ever I had previously felt.

My boy I left behind to guard my effects, with instructions that here he was to remain till my return, and do all in his power to assist the old woman in her task ; in fact, serve her and her patient as faithfully as he had ever done me. Without a murmur he expressed his willingness, although well I knew how much better he would have been pleased to accompany me.

But time was an object, we had a powerful crew and a new craft, the rapidly-handled paddles fairly lifted her from the water, and we rushed almost with the velocity of a steamboat past snags, trees, rocks, and pools.

My hunting canoe the half-bred Frenchman had appropriated ; it was a small one, built to carry two persons, capable on an emergency of supporting three. With the advantage of the current in his favour, doubtless he could obtain considerable speed, more especially when he must well know that his life pro-

bably depended on the result; but for all that, we could do three miles for his two, and keep up the pace, which a single arm, more especially if not in training, would be unable.

To myself it appeared a puzzle where the recreant could go, where he would find shelter, and how he was to live until he did. But not so with the Indians, from the first they expressed a decided belief that the Mission, four or five days distant, would be the sanctuary he would make for.

The exercise, cool air, and change of scene had acted most beneficially upon the old chief; once more he was himself again, and the youngest of the crew did not handle his paddle with greater dexterity and strength.

We had been three hours embarked, the sun was nigh touching the distant tree-tops, as we entered a long straight stretch of comparatively calm water, when the keen eyes of the pursuers distinguished the canoe of the fugitive rounding a point where the stream took a curve. The chase was now truly exciting, and well for the paddles that they were seasoned, for they were plied with a vigour that no other wood could withstand. Down the centre of the stretch we shot, at a pace certainly not under six miles an hour. In a short time the

point was rounded where the foe had disappeared; but unfortunately from here the river was as erratic in its course as it is possible to imagine; pools and rapids were passed in rapid succession, one moment skimming over the surface on level keel, the next bounding over the surging foam.

Night was rapidly approaching, and at the pace we had been rushing onward, must ere this have overtaken the pursued, but the Indians seemed unwilling to admit that such could be the case, so with undaunted vigour continued exerting their strength for another mile, when it became obvious that we had got the slip, and that with all the cunning of the Indians, they had a proficient to contend with, Master Antoine having doubtlessly landed immediately after doubling a point, and walked inland, taking the canoe with him, so that his place of disembarkation should not be discovered by us in our passage downwards.

Two widely different things are floating with the current of a rapid stream to returning against its powerful force. Without a murmur or word of complaint the canoe was put about, and renewed energy and determination displayed to cope with the difficulties now to be contended against. I am not certain that the reticence displayed by the dusky

crew at being outwitted, was not intended as a compliment to the person who gave evidence of such knowledge of strategy. It was now night, not even gloaming, but Providence seemed to favour our work, for a large full moon rose over the tree-tops, and with her cold silvery light pointed out our course, unless in such places as the thick sombre foliaged cedars and hemlocks obtruded a barrier to its advance. And the stars joined in their good offices, and shone as brightly as ever it was my lot to see them. But the erratic course of the river, fringed as it was over the greater part of its course, possessed nooks and reaches shrouded in such impenetrable darkness that no mortal eye could discover a fugitive or evidence of his presence, unless by the most careful and close inspection. Knowing that such was the case, and the delay that must occur to thoroughly examine both sides of the stream on our route upwards, I proposed that we should at once ascend to where we had lost sight of our foe, commencing the search on both sides of the river from there, working downwards, while the canoe, mid-stream, was kept abreast of those hunting for the trail.

It must have been midnight ere we recovered our lost ground, and then it was deemed better to

rest, that in the morning, when the fresh invigorating rays of the sun revealed all that was observable to human eye, all might feel fit and keen to renew the task they had undertaken.

Such an unexpected and painful *dénouement* had resulted to my kind and ever considerate friends from my bringing with me to their peaceful home a man I knew nothing of, that I felt most poignantly that I, although unwittingly, had been the primary cause of their grief.

The more I thought and brooded over the matter, the more unforgiving and unrelenting I felt against the aggressor. Then the poor victim, prostrate on what was in all probability her last resting-place in life, would rise before me, her large pleading eyes ever from the darkness of the surrounding wood seemed gazing into mine as if upbraiding me for having treated her with indifference. If she had loved me, was it her fault? could the poor untutored child of nature help observing the distinction between the civilised man and the savage, and make her choice in accordance with it? No! and it would be a poor compliment to our boasted enlightenment if we thought otherwise. I am not vain enough to imagine it was my person attracted her, but believe any of my countrymen situated as

I had been would have been received the same. No; it was but the contrast between the indifference she received from her own race, and the courtesy paid her by the stranger that caused her to form an estimate entirely in favour of the latter.



## CHAPTER XV.

WITH the first glimmer of daylight all were up and ready for a fresh start. Two of our company were transported to the other side of the stream, the others remaining on the side where we had slept, each party's duty being to hunt the margin for evidence where our foe had landed, while I remained midway between them, ready to transport either across to the side their services were required upon. But a short time had the search progressed when a whistle called me into the left bank; the old chief pointed me out a piece of rag covered with pitch adhering to the trunk of a partially submerged cedar that projected from the bank. In a moment I recognised it as what I had used to caulk the vessel with. In drawing her ashore it had been scraped off the craft's bottom by the rough bark. As the soil around was soft and swampy, with little undergrowth from being subject

to overflow, no difficulty was found in discovering the renegade's tracks. And as there was no sign of the canoe, and the impressions from his feet were deep, the scoundrel had doubtless carried it with him. For several hundred yards we followed the trail; here the pursued had evidently halted, for an indentation showed that he had leaned the canoe against a tree, the reverse end on which it rested making a hollow of several inches in the soft black soil.

Here we were again at fault, but not long so, for one of the younger Indians discovered a fresh trail leading back to the river. How this break had been made in the track was accounted for by the fugitive having mounted a windfall, walking along it till he reached some dead timber; this he had doubtless also used to tread on, as he had retraced his steps to the river margin. On reaching the stream, again we were thrown out; however, it was improbable that a person trying to avoid us would go down with the current, knowing us to be below, or cross and take the right bank, as it was the verge of a district traversed daily by members of the old chief's tribe; from these reasons we resolved to search the western bank upwards.

Disembarking again at the point where we had passed the night, with undaunted energy in spite

of the disappointments they had encountered, the Indians recommenced their labour, when after advancing nearly a mile, a slow plaintive whistle called us together ; it was where an otter slide occurred, and the fugitive had taken advantage of it to disguise traces of his landing. But the penetrating eyes of the Indian are not easily deceived, for with unfailing precision they pointed it out, moreover took up the trail, and followed it with the ease that a hound would a hot scent.

This was encouraging, and we all commenced to look forward to a speedy and successful termination of our expedition, when the canoe was found, cut in several places across the bottom, and the gunwale broken, doubtlessly done that now the scoundrel had no further use for it, no one else should have its services.

This discovery only caused a temporary delay ; forward we advanced till four or five miles must have been traversed, and we commenced to leave the low ground for dry and more elevated land, making our progress much slower from the additional difficulty of keeping the track. Here the Indians held a consultation ; there appeared perfect unanimity in their opinions, so one of the party was dismissed to examine a ford some miles ahead, while the others made

the utmost exertion to follow the trail; but the labour was exceedingly trying. Still no evidence of impatience was displayed, their work was done as thoroughly and as uncomplainingly as at the start. To my knowledge food had not crossed some of their lips since the pursuit had commenced, yet they manifested the same lithesome activity, the same zeal in the cause of their chief, as if they had been the best housed, best fed retainers.

The control that an Indian chief exercises over his followers has something inexplicable about it, and certainly worthy of the greatest admiration. They receive no emoluments of any description, patronage or partiality would in no way benefit them—in fact, there is nothing that the chief can do to improve their condition or reward their service—yet they are ever at his beck and call, willing to go to war or accept peace, to be friends or foes, in fact, anything that is demanded of them. The majority of these are hereditary, but failing an heir, then the person to rule them is selected, to whom, once they give their allegiance, it almost amounts to an impossibility to make them renounce their oath. Talk of loyalty! how many of we civilised, highly-educated, enlightened people might go to the aborigines of North America, the benighted heathen, the unredeemed savage,

and learn what it is in the true acceptance of the term.

We had been halted some time, to enjoy a ration of biscuit I had served, when we were rejoined by the young man who a couple of hours previously had been detached on special service. The information he brought was apparently important; soon it was communicated to me. Antoine had forded a river three or four miles ahead, and, by taking such a course, he was doubtless directing his steps, as previously supposed, to the Mission, where the familiar-named white squaw lived.

A council of war was at once held. The chief proposed, and all agreed with him, that our force was not sufficiently strong to successfully carry out our expedition if Antoine had gone there. So a messenger should at once be despatched for three or four more of the tribe, who were to use every expedition to overtake us while we marched slowly forward. No sooner said than done. In five minutes afterwards might have been seen a young brave, going at the long swinging trot peculiar to his race, making rapidly for the river.

Although nominally the head of the party, still I knew not the country through which we were proceeding, nor could I compete with the Indians in

tracking; so my command was more honorary than real, the old chief being the person referred to on all occasions of moment, who, in spite of being full of years, proved himself thoroughly equal to any emergency that might arise.

Cutting across country, to avoid the delay of tracking, and possibly making a detour, we reached the stream alluded to, where tracks of the fugitive had been discovered. It was deep and sluggish-looking, at the same time remarkably straight. As far as the eye could see in either direction, there was nothing to indicate a ford, except at the point where we stood, and there, true enough, in the clammy, alluvial soil that margined it, were fresh moccasin tracks, apparently worn by a white man, as the toes were turned out. After fording the stream, which was waist deep, and now at this season icy cold, we again found the footmarks, which we were able to trace for some distance, but lost again as soon as we got to the high grounds. So fresh were these indications of man's presence that but a few hours must have elapsed since they were made, so that twelve or fourteen miles at most separated the pursuer from the pursued. The old chief now felt convinced that his surmise was correct, and that the assassin was making for the mission-house, as, with the exception of one or two wandering

families, whose camping-places scarcely ever continued two weeks the same, there was no human habitation except it he could expect assistance from.

Sundry proposals for making a detour were advanced, so as to head the fugitive, but the old chief, not feeling equal to the exertion of a forced march, or not wishing to peril the lives of his followers, who might expose themselves if permitted to go ahead without him, forbade such a plan being thought of. Pushing forward at a steady, if not a hurried gait, although tracking in many places had become impossible from the rockiness and dryness of the soil, frequently we came across indications that the object of our pursuit had unquestionably passed that way. He must have deemed himself safe and free from all chance of pursuit, doubtless considering the trick he played us on the river sufficient to prevent our discovering his fresh starting-point, for he had evidently captured, if not shot, a Canadian grouse, which he had plucked as he walked, for the feathers, from the stillness of the atmosphere and the damp that hung on the shrubs, still adhered to them in sufficient numbers to mark his route.

Very confident must the blackguard have been to be guilty of so reckless a proceeding, for well he must have known that his life would most certainly



be forfeited if he fell into the pursuers' hands, if no one was there to plead for him who had sufficient interest to be listened to. And why should I interfere in his behalf, for was not I the victim he intended to sacrifice? No, no; time enough to say what I will do when asked for assistance; and there is too much of the wolf in Master Antoine's character—that obstinacy that causes the animal to make his jaws close on his assailant with his last breath—for him to stoop to petition me for aid.

A slight illumination to the north-west of our halting-place foretold the probability of it being the reflection of the fugitive's camp fire. Cariboo and the other young brave wished to set out as soon as it was discovered, and capture, if necessary kill, its maker, provided they found their surmises correct. The chief refused peremptorily to sanction such a course, in which I supported him, for well I knew what it meant, viz., that they would steal close to where their intended prey lay, wait till the dark cold hour before morning, and, when the fire had probably almost died out, shoot their foe at close quarters, or brain him with their tomahawks. Moreover, for all either of us knew, murder had not been committed, and unless death resulted from his pistol-shot, I would in no way countenance the taking of the man's life.

I felt that I had to be very guarded in my conduct in the affair, for I did not wish to be accused of lukewarmness because the offender was a white man; at the same time I owed my country and self a duty to prevent an excess of zeal on the part of the pursuers. It was arranged after breakfast that we should remain at our present halting-place till joined by the reinforcement, so, with Cariboo as companion, I ascended one of the highest ridges in the vicinity to obtain a view over the country we were about to traverse. The timber that covered it was principally pine, and far as the eye could see there was no indication of large water-courses. I do not mean to say that there were no rills wide enough to step over, because between each ridge such could be found; but nothing larger; so that if the lumberman should in future visit this locality he will find the labour of getting the logs out more than sufficient to eat up the remuneration for his toil.

From the utter stillness that reigned around, and the undeviating similarity of the scene—ridge after ridge appearing a counterpart of its neighbours, and the whole surmounted with the same sombre foliaged trees, they varying so little in form that it had the most depressing effects upon my spirits—sincerely I wished that circumstances had not oc-

curred to bring me here ; further, I had a duty to perform that now the angry flush of passion had passed over, was far from agreeable. Moreover, the season was getting so late, that it promised almost to be impossible for me to reach civilisation this year ; for our return to the shanty would not occur for many days, whereas, if the necessity of this expedition had not taken place, I should have been on the verge of starting for home, when nothing would be allowed to delay me that human agency could overcome.

My companion had discovered a porcupine's retreat. Not to use an effort to capture such a wholesome and savoury addition to our larder, he would have deemed neglecting the good things Providence placed in his way, so with heart and soul he devoted himself in enlarging the orifice so as to reach his prey. As frequently happens when persons are employed in the woods, they are visited by some of its tiny residents either to watch what they are about, or with the hope of obtaining a meal through their agency. The little strangers were a party of those saucy, charming, ever-welcome, active little fellows, blue-caps (*Parus cæruleus*), the same bird that is so well known at home, and a special favourite with every school-boy. In the northern portion of the North-American continent where timber abounds,

they are extremely numerous. As I observed these companions of my childhood, scenes far distant arose before me. Places where I had found their nests, a hole in an apple-tree, a chink in some shrub-clad wall, or even in the spout of an old pump, were recalled to memory, and how the valiant little mother would puff herself out in her enmity at her discoverers, and nip their fingers if bold enough to intrude their hands. Again, I could recollect being so cruel, and getting deservedly well punished for my conduct, depriving the fussy little parent of her voluminous nest of moss and feathers, and an endless number of pretty little white eggs sparsely marked with tiny red spots. Aye, nearly thirty years have passed since then, still the remembrance of them is as fresh as if they occurred but yesterday. And here, so far away from the scene of these exploits, are their cousins as impudent and prying as those across the wide Atlantic ocean.

I was not long in learning the object that attracted them and induced them to favour us with their society. It was not the love of company as some might imagine, far more selfish motives were the incentive. Cariboo had removed and pulled to pieces in his labours an old decayed log, throwing the different portions some feet behind him; this rotten timber was perfectly honey-combed with ants,

and their eggs were laid bare and exposed on every fragment; and the activity and appetite displayed by my feathered pets in collecting their favourite food was truly surprising. I have often wondered at the Indian's capacity for stowage of food; but here they had not a chance in rivalry if consumption in proportion to size of body be considered. But the prickly beast had been secured, so I bid the wee birdies good-bye, and left them uninterrupted to enjoy the good things that Providence had provided for them.

It is a curious circumstance and worthy of consideration, that the northern and temperate parts of North America possess many birds and quadrupeds almost identical with those of the same regions of Europe. As these must have had a common origin, and are capable of standing severe cold, which is their fatherland? and how did they travel from the one to the other? Over regions unknown to us far up to the north where the seas that divide the continents are narrow and broken by the occurrence of numerous islands or connected by fields of ice.

In the temperate regions of South Africa, Australia, and South America this does not occur, for there are no species of the one land common to the other, because they are severed by oceans too wide for the

feathered families to traverse, and the belt of tropics that intervenes between north and south is so insuperable a barrier against migration that if attempted it never appears to be done so with success. One exception to this I know, viz., the snipe, for I have shot them south of the equator, and apparently identical with those of Northern Europe. But this leads me to believe that the snipe does not go north of the temperate zone, and so, although capable of enduring severe cold, could not submit to the severity of an Arctic winter, if even it were, under such circumstances, able to procure food, which it could not after frost has set its stamp on the country.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ON reaching our rendezvous, we found that the old chief had killed some grouse, which he had already prepared for cooking. This, combined with Cariboo's fortune, was most acceptable, for our supply of provisions was limited, and in a few hours there would be more mouths to feed, and short commons has almost as demoralising an effect upon Indians as upon white men. True the former, if entirely deprived of food, would live nearly double the length of time that a European would, but, with all their stoicism and this advantage, they have a very great objection to an empty stomach. Before dark we were joined by the reinforcement, who looked sorely travel-stained, for they had not lagged by the way. One of the new arrivals had with him an indescribable cur dog, almost destitute of hair, which was reported to possess the quality of running a human trail. Whether this be true or not, the fugitive would have little to fear from its



ferocity, for a well-directed kick or cut of a cane would immediately have rendered the creature *hors de combat*.

As soon as the moon was sufficiently elevated to give us the assistance of its light, a fresh start was made, the course being across country without any sign of a trail, our line of march as usual in Indian file, the only mode ever adopted by the aborigines. This tramp was extremely fatiguing to me, as my eyes being less keen than my companions', I constantly kept toeing stumps, or falling over boughs and limbs that had dropped from the surrounding trees. Not a whisper was spoken by any of the party, and, but for my floundering about, the *cortége* might have passed within fifty yards of a vigilant sentinel without being detected. For the advance-guard of an army, for scouting and outpost duty, these people would be invaluable, and although individually they are not able physically to cope with a white man, still they are possessed of courage and wonderful powers of endurance, and for forced marches, even when hampered with a load, the speed and facility with which they adapt themselves to the circumstances of any position that may arise, is truly wonderful. The supposition of the old chief was again correct; the fugitive had crossed a rivulet

some hours in our advance—footsteps, crushed grass, and trampled-down brush told the tale. So, unless the pursued should become alarmed, and double back, no doubt existed in our minds that he was making his way to the Mission.

Being satisfied with the result, a halt for some hours was called. During this the old chief and myself held a consultation, when it was decided that every effort should be made to effect Antoine's capture without disabling or even wounding him. When our resolve was made public it evidently created great dissatisfaction among our followers. One went so far as to attempt to argue the matter, the pith of his speech being that, suppose the would-be assassin had been an Indian instead of a white man, such leniency would not have been shown him; therefore in our eyes the white man was better than the Indian. How was he better? He knew more, could read and write, lived in communities where laws existed, and were strictly enforced against evil doers. Thus the white man, who had these advantages, and possessed all this knowledge, when guilty of a crime should be more severely dealt with than a poor ignorant Indian committing the same fault. In this there was doubtless much truth. The old chief seemingly also thought so, and that if he attempted arguing the

matter he would have been worsted, so, rising on his feet in the graceful manner I have so often seen him do when he had something of importance to communicate, waving his hands to call for silence, simply said, "It is my will." And from that instant not a further question on the propriety of the resolution was mooted.

Next morning when our start was made the dog was tried. For a length of time the animal did not seem to understand what was required of him, and no wonder, for the trail was now many hours' old and therefore cold; however, at length he settled to his work, but incessantly kept giving tongue, a circumstance that if his services had been continued till we came near the fugitive would have put him on his guard, thus giving him time to prepare his weapons for defence, and prevent our taking him by surprise. So the cur had a string put round his neck, and was handed over to the care of his owner.

The course Antoine pursued must have been a marked way, although when we came upon it or crossed it, I could see no indication that such was the case, for the Indians always appeared to be able to cross his trail, and that without any apparent difficulty.

The want of larger water-courses than the most diminutive rivulets was one of the marked peculiarities of the country through which we were proceeding; the ground, unless on the margin of these, was seldom swampy, and the quantity of timber, which appeared illimitable, was not so large, although quite as dense, as that in the vicinity of the shanty. Doubtless some day this will be a grand sheep country, but even if emigration poured into it to-morrow, that date must be some time distant, for it will take twenty years at least after the trees have been felled to get rid of the stumps, aye possibly longer than that, for of all uncompromising things with a power to resist decay, well known to the settler's cost, the pine-stump takes the lead. On our tramp I have frequently observed deer tracks, and other indications of their presence, but so far have not seen any, although the Indians are frequently reporting their viewing them. My never taking the lead, and their eyes being more keen than mine to detect the presence of animal life, doubtless accounts for this. A hare now partially white with black tips to its ears is very common; its resemblance to the mountain or blue hare of Scotland is no greater than similarity of colour, for the animal of this region is much more compact in build, and gifted, I should

think, with more cunning and less agility ; moreover, it is an inhabitant of the timber lands, the other of the bleak hill-sides. The Canadian grouse (*Tetrao Canadensis*) is also frequently flushed, when they take shelter in the nearest limb, their confidence in man's good intentions, the wonderful amount of curiosity they display, and the grotesque attitudes they get into to gratify it, being ludicrous in the extreme.

That night another consultation was held. It was evident to all that the fugitive had now no idea of retracing his steps, and endeavouring to reach civilisation at present, but to push on to the Mission, either to make it a halting-place till chance would afford him an opportunity of going further, or if not remaining there till spring opened. Such being the case it was determined to hurry forward, so as to get in advance of him and intercept him a mile or two from his destination, as it was probable that his near approach to it, without having learned any evidence of pursuit, would, from conscious security, induce him to be off his guard, and so be more easily made a prisoner.

The details of the next two days' march are destitute of interest, for the same monotonous forest surrounded us, and the rivulets no larger than here-

tofore had exactly the same characteristics. It was night when we reached the place destined for our ambuscade. The spot was admirably suited for such a purpose: a dip between two ridges covered with brush and dwarf timber, where a stream about twenty yards wide was crossed by a path, evidently made by the frequenters of the Mission, which was only two miles distant. Four men were left close to the brook's margin, while I and the others crossed over and secreted ourselves on the river side. My services could have been dispensed with, but I feared that the young Indians might in their passion vent their wrath upon the prisoner, if no one but the old chief was there to restrain them.

It was surmised by all that if Antoine was only a few hours behind us, that darkness would not cause him to stop, but that he would push on without halt till shelter, now so close, was reached. Thus all with anxious anticipation looked forward to a speedy termination to their labour.

“But man proposes, God disposes.” After an anxious vigilant night, we were as far from attaining our purpose as ever. Some surmised that we were late in reaching here, and that our prey had passed before we had come to it, but an examination of the ground told that no human foot



had trod in the vicinity for days. Then a fresh cause of difficulty arose by one of the Indians stating that there was another but more circuitous and less used path to the Mission, a mile or two further up the stream, and that it was not improbable that Antoine, having been here in the summer, knew of it, and consequently had selected it. But the old chief was determined; he would not allow the party to be separated, and felt convinced that we had made choice of the proper place. Day commenced, although with flagging steps to wear by, and the most sanguine began to look discouraged; doubts of the propriety of spending another night here were even advanced, when the confounded dog, that had been tied up as useless, barked in challenge to some one approaching; a voice, and one that all immediately recognised, spoke to it in the coaxing terms usually employed to pacify such animals. From the intonation it was evident that the circumstance had not produced any alarm in the speaker, he possibly thinking it was one of the curs belonging to some of the persons residing at the Mission.

Soon after, the object of our search came in view. At the margin he halted for a moment, then entered the stream and traversed it; but as he was leaving the water to ascend the steep bank, he was sprung upon by those in front of him, his arms pinioned,



and his revolver and knife taken away, the other Indians rushing across the water to the assistance of the captors.

Escorting our prisoner, at length we reached the Mission, the expression that marked the different members of the *cortége* being wonderfully at variance; on the brow and in the dark snake-like eye of the younger Indian was a look which predicted a longing for revenge, a hungering after blood difficult to satisfy, while the prisoner returned with scorn their plainly expressed hostility.

Speaking of the Mission, a place inhabited by persons devoted to a holy life, persons who have given up the world to preach glad tidings to the heathen, I expected to find a spot hallowed and sacred from its very defencelessness, surrounded by fruit trees and gardens, reared under the industrious and skilful hands of its inhabitants; but such was not the case, for an old stockade fence, such as may be seen surrounding the existing frontier or fur-trading forts, enclosed an area of about half an acre, in which were three log-houses, and an old dingy barn-like edifice, which the old chief designated the home of the Great Spirit.

Quiet and stealthy as our approach had been—and who can traverse the ground with such perfect freedom from noise as the moccasin foot-clad Indian?—our advance was soon made known by the deep sharp

voice of half a dozen curs, whose flat sides and distinctly marked ribs told but too plainly that they did not live sumptuously. But the Indian dog ever has this gaunt, half-starved look, for whether food be abundant in the camp, or otherwise, their owners seem to have the belief that a dog is of no value that cannot provide for its own wants.

Sad, indeed, is the fate of these unhappy curs, born frequently without a shelter, nursed by a half-starved mother, abused and punished by whosoever chooses to do so, seldom free from mange, they prematurely become old, and ultimately, when unable to keep up with their owners while travelling, are left behind to become the prey of the first hungry wolf that falls across them.

The inhabitants of the Mission well knew what the angry voices of the ill-mannered pack indicated, and soon a motley crew of about a dozen half-breeds and Indians came forth. A more uninteresting, filthy, unattractive crowd I have seldom seen, and if such were the specimens of humanity that the missionaries had to exercise their vocation on, or that this was a type of the result of their labours, then those good people that absent themselves from country friends and civilisation are to be pitied.

However, with all their unattractiveness of ap-

pearance, they possessed the virtue of hospitality, and angry was the controversy, nay more, blows nearly ensued between the various contestants who desired to become our hosts.

Two very repulsive-looking men seized me, one dragged me to the left, while another, *nolens volens*, pulled me to the right; to save my clothing, if for no other motive, caused me rather roughly to shake them off, when who should you think appeared on the scene but the chief's youngest daughter, who had been induced to leave her people and home by Antoine. Reproaches for her desertion by him naturally might have been expected; but no, true to her love in spite of all she had suffered, she passed her father as if she ignored his presence *in toto*, and threw herself into the prisoner's arms.

Her anguish when she found that he was tied was most touching, and first one then another she supplicated with tearful eye and upraised hand to cut his bonds.

But no, Antoine was doomed, not even her influence could save him from his fate, and soon the poor girl felt convinced that her efforts were but waste of time and strength.

At length she sadly sat down beside him, and with a sad look of submission to the decrees of fate

that must have affected the most callous, placed her paramour's bound hands upon her head.

After a due amount of consideration I selected for my residence, what appeared to be the largest and best kept of the buildings; but bad indeed was the best, for of all the filthy, redolent of foul gases, dingy dwellings I had ever seen, this proved the worst.

Was it to be wondered at, then, that I soon stole forth, not only to breathe the pure air of heaven, but to avoid a species of cross-examination that was exceedingly distasteful? A building, however humble, dedicated by man to God's service, in its repose, has ever had for me a great attraction, for in the deep and sombre shadows that surround you when under its roof, there is a feeling paramount in my bosom that I am between the ordinary outer world and a realm we only know by imagination. Of course, few of us are constructed alike, so outer influences have different effects; thus, all may not think or feel as I do; but this I will say, that I never leave a house of worship, of whatever denomination it may be, without feeling a better man, aye, and what a happy feeling that is, for it causes me to enjoy the sensation experienced by the footsore, worn-out wanderer, who through some chance combination of circumstances is able to get rid of a portion of a burden

that for miles has been crushing him down into the dust, and bringing him nearer and nearer to his final parade.

The interior of the chapel was far from ostentatious ; here and there upon its walls hung a cheap and indifferent print, while the communion-table was decorated with a sadly-tarnished cover, one that evidently had seen long years of service, and on which were placed a cross supporting a representation of the dead Saviour, and flanked on either side by four candlesticks of verdigris-corroded brass. So scant was the light that minutes were required for the eye to distinguish the surroundings, although from a window in the gable a long dusty narrow stream of the warm rays of the setting sun, straight as an arrow in its flight, came from roof to transept. With cautious and subdued step I moved forward. A desire to approach the holiest portion of the edifice and humble myself, was the cause ; by degrees space between me and the door was increased, till I was on the verge of the sanctuary. In another moment I should have been on my knees, when a movement of something earthly caught my ear, my eye instinctively followed the sound, when it rested upon a pale careworn face, so sad, so earnest, yet so submissive, that I stood spell-bound. In those

features was a memory of the past, a dream of boyhood formed into a reality, an age dead brought back to life. But who could it be, some one I had met previously; but where and when? Still the mind and memory worked together and whispered that she I gazed on was no ordinary acquaintance, but one whose fate had been at some past period closely interwoven with my own.

Disturb the unknown in her worship to satisfy my curiosity, would have been sacrilege, so I withdrew as silently as I had entered, with a freight of thought upon my mind that almost overwhelmed me. Outside the building long I stood, and slow the minutes glided into the past, yet I was not impatient, and therefore did not fret at the delay.

The sun had disappeared, and the dark shadows from the hill-side and giant trees were commencing to amalgamate in one undefinable mass, when the door was gently opened, and a stooping, heavily-draped figure, with weary, slow, and uncertain step approached me. But a few yards severed us before she raised her head; previous to that she was ignorant of my presence, but when she did so, and the full face was revealed, I discovered that it was my boy-love, the dream of my youth, the never-forgotten daughter of the old captain at Orillia.

Aye, it was she, she whose vision I had often seen in imagination hovering near me in the snow-sweeping nights of warfare when the exposed trench was my resting-place, or when in murky, blustering darkness the gallant craft that bore me pitched into the ever hungry seas that craved to engulf it. Yes, it was she, but how sad the change; the bright joyous girl of twenty years ago, now the decrepit, worn-out, prematurely aged woman. "Time," I thought, "had dealt roughly with me, but how leniently in comparison."

My tongue for a moment, through the influences of astonishment and surprise, lost its power; at length with abated breath, as if speaking what I had ceased to have a right even to think of in silence, I pronounced her name.

"Not that, not that," she answered. "Years have glided by since the world knew me by that name. I am now the Sister Dolores, and truly I have been well called; but who are you, speak, I say, who are you?" gazing more and more intently in my face till her very eyes seemed to search my soul. "Again, I say, who are you?"

Fear for the consequences made my utterance slow; at length my Christian name was pronounced, when a shriek, so long, so shrill, that it appeared as if out of



the power of mortals to produce, was uttered, and ere I could collect presence of mind to give her support, she fell prostrate on the earth.

Before I had time even to raise her, before I could come to her relief, a crowd had assembled, and the apparently lifeless form was carried off. Sad was my heart as I watched her borne away.

So at last my craving to know who is the White Squaw has been gratified, and how cruelly has the information been imparted to me.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A MORE miserable night than the one that followed I do not think it would be possible to pass ; filth predominated everywhere, even in the cooking, and the room stunk from the crowd of unwashed mortality that blocked up every available corner, moreover, it literally swarmed with fleas, and no amount of ingenuity would deny them becoming on such terms of intimacy with your person that might be exceedingly agreeable to them, but far from so to you.

I sat and smoked pipe after pipe, but even this consoler for nearly all earthly ills was but a Job's comforter after all, so that I could see no way out of my difficulties. If it had not been so late, and that the evening had set in bitterly cold, I would have proposed camping out ; even if the Indians did not choose to do the same, still I could induce them

to erect a shelter for my sole accommodation, of cedar or hemlock boughs, but it was too late, so like the young cubs I was forced to grin and bear it.

However slowly time may pass when we are suffering discomfort, still if you have patience it will ultimately slip away, and the hour for retiring to my blanket had almost arrived, when the door of the house was opened, and a man in the garb of a priest entered.

He was full of years, far beyond three score and ten, still his figure was erect, while from his chin depended a long beard, white as snow. Each inmate of the cabin, as he passed, bowed his head almost to the ground, as if inspired with more than natural reverence. At length he approached where I was seated, and in soft musical language, strongly tinged with a French accent, spoke to me. So prepossessing was his manner, so thoroughly did he look what I knew him to be, that he required no indorsement to make any one believe that he was a good and true servant of the Cross.

“ My son, you are a Catholic ? ”

“ Yes, father, I am.”

“ I would speak with you, but not before those that are present. Will you accompany me ? ”

We crossed the enclosure to a small log-house—so

small externally that, deducting the room occupied by the bedstead, there must have been but a scant supply of space for the ordinary duties of life. A hoarse key grated in the door, a ponderous bolt was shot with the report of a pistol, and we entered, the whole being in the most impenetrable darkness. At length a match was struck, and a saucer of grease with a thin meagre wick found, which scarcely produced sufficient light to see into the corners of the limited apartment. A perfect anchorite this man must have been; within the dwelling was not a vestige of aught that spoke of comfort in the most limited sense, and yet at his age, after his years of toil and labour in his Master's service, I could not help thinking he deserved a better sunset to his life; possibly he desired no other, but conscious that he had done his work, reaped his pleasure in the knowledge of it.

Often do I think what a fearful thing it is, to glide on into the vale of years, till you have approached so nigh the verge of the precipice, that it is but the matter of days, possibly hours, till you fall over into the gulf of eternity, and not to have one of your own flesh and blood, your own kith and kin to watch by you, tend you in your weakness, and help to shelter the flickering light of departing life from the cool

blast that would exterminate it before its time. Yes, sad indeed must be the hours that precede demise, when left alone to combat death.

And this is what this aged and holy man has to look forward to, at no very distant date ; but to my narrative.

“ My son, as a Christian, will you not do me a favour ? ” he inquired.

“ Certainly, if in my power.”

“ Well, assist me to have my countryman liberated ; the Indians will assuredly take his life, and he is a sinner, a bad man I fear, and so the less prepared to leave this world.”

“ But I cannot interfere, he has committed murder, taken a human life. No, father, ask me what you will that is in my power to grant, and willingly will I do it ; but you now require of me what I have no power to do.”

“ But, my son, you can intercede with the old chief in his behalf, and doubtless will succeed ; but if you should not, you can afford him an opportunity to escape, and you will assuredly receive a blessing. Think if you were in his position through the chance of circumstances, and think further that, you as well as all of us will some day have to crave for mercy, yes, beg and importune for it, for we are all sinners,

and as you hope to receive forgiveness, stretch forth your hand to rescue this unfortunate man from an untimely end, and probably a death by torture. Grant me what I ask, and you shall be remembered in my prayers."

"Once more, father, I cannot; it grieves me to refuse, but it is out of my power."

My decision caused the old man's features to alter from the former kindly look to one indicating anger. After rising to depart, I said, "Father, be not angry with me, I have miles to travel, and numerous dangers to encounter before I reach civilisation; let us part in peace and with your blessing, for we probably shall never meet again."

But he drew himself up to his full height, fixed his keen penetrating eyes upon me, and pointing to the door said, "My blessing, rather my curse! You, a Christian, yet would hand over one of your own faith to the unbaptised heathen, go! And may you be dealt with as you deal with others."

Remonstrance was useless; grieved, yes, even sick at heart, I stole forth into the night air.

I certainly had had sufficient excitement for one day to cause an exhausted body and overwrought brain to crave for rest; but no, lie which way I would, close my eyes, and keep them shut for inde-

finite periods of time, alter the position of my blankets or temporary pillow, sleep persistently refused to come to my aid.

And the atmosphere was stifling, not from heat, but from the foetid exhalations arising from my numerous filthy comrades.

At length I could endure my position no longer, so rose and went forth. The night air was intensely cold, so cold that it crept into the uttermost parts of my body, still, even that was preferable to the foul atmosphere of the confined cabin. At length I reached the river-side, the water broke and played in a thousand eddying, murmuring ripples, while the cold clear light of a rising moon tipped their surface with a sheen, so cold and metallic as to cause me to draw away for fear a false or too hurried step would precipitate me into its embrace. And away across the river loomed the dark giant hemlocks and pines, blended into one sombre funeral pall without break or outline. As I looked upon the scene a weird-like feeling stole over me, not lessened by the distant, but distinct bay of the grey wolf. Again, again, his call was answered, each voice bringing fancies that the fiends of hell were loose and seeking for their victims.

I am, to a certain extent, superstitious—I think all



my countrymen are more or less so—so I remained and listened, and almost feared that some of the denizens of another world were about to appear, or that although invisible they were floating round me, plotting in their elfish spite some piece of ill-fortune to be practised on me. Nearer and more doleful sounded the voices of the wolves, and the scornful maniacal call of the owl chimed in to add fresh horror to the scene. I was about to retire, for I was excited, nervous, and the body craved for what it would not accept, rest, when my arm was touched so gently, so imperceptibly, that it might have been caused by the caress of a playful breeze. I turned, started back, for I was totally unprepared to find that I was not alone, beside me stood a heavily-draped female figure.

“Be not alarmed, it is me.” I knew the voice too well to require further identity. “I am here to seek a favour at your hands. You owe me one, for you stole my girlish heart, and vowed to love me ever, but fate took you away, and as distance increased between us and months and years glided on, hope died out and left me widowed in heart, and wrecked in health. I say for this you owe me reparation, and by granting my request I freely forgive you for the past, aye everything, although you have made me

old, who am yet young, a broken-hearted woman before I knew the joys of life."

"Say no more, I know it all. Whatever I can do, shall be done."

"Save this man. You refused to listen to the entreaties of the good old father, listen now to mine, so that in the future short span of life before me, I may still keep you as the idol of my memory, and believe that you are not so faithless as I thought you. We shall never meet again on earth, you will not, dare not refuse my last request."

"I had resolved not to interfere; but your appeal I cannot refuse. I will do my best."

A hand was held out, a hand I had so often kissed when the warm blood of youth flowed through its veins. Now, when I took it, it was cold and damp, and wasted away; I raised it to my lips, in a moment after it was withdrawn, and noiselessly as did Sister Dolores approach me, as silently did she steal away.

Alone, yes I was again alone, and I feared to be so, my feelings were so overwrought that I dreaded solitude, dreaded my own dark shadow, so hastened, with the steps of the guilty, back to the dwellings.

On passing the shanty where the prisoner was confined, I looked into the room, for the door was on the jar; in a corner lit up by the yellow flickering un-

certain light of the fire sat Antoine, his black eyes illuminated with feelings of revenge and passion. As I advanced, they caught mine—what deadly hate was in that look. Leaning against him, and sound asleep, her face brightened with a childish smile, reposed the poor Indian girl, true to her love, more true than ever because the object of her adoration was in trouble.

What sting can hurt like being deserted by her we love? What can give such consolation in our misfortunes, as to know that she, in whom all our hopes and aspirations are centred, loves deeper and more fondly the heavier and more intense our miseries?

Anxious not to disturb the slumberers, I left, pondering how I was to fulfil my lately-made promise.

Day broke dismal and drear, the clouds appeared only penning up their tears, to break out afresh in bitterer grief; the earth, the trees, the hill-sides were humid and moist, while a raw fog in fleecy vapours arose with slow but doubtful progress.

When all was ready for our return journey, and prisoner, escort, and chief were assembled, I approached the old man, and asked him to let Antoine go. I was going to plead, to urge my case in the strongest terms, but the settled determined look that

passed over his brow, and the scowling, vindictive, defiant look of his followers told me that any further effort was but a waste of breath, and likely to entail upon myself trouble. The cavalcade was reinforced by the old man's daughter, and not for a moment did she leave the side of the object of her love; for the first few miles our progress was slow, but when the sun had burst forth, and his genial welcome rays had warmed and dried both ground and herbage, our advance became more rapid.

Towards noon an odour peculiar to the wild lands, and one not to be forgotten when experienced, attracted universal comment, for it was the peculiar smell that indicated that the forest was on fire. In this, however, there was deemed to be nothing alarming, for every indication told that the fire was still far distant; and, moreover, except a change of wind occurred, it was far from probable that it would advance in our direction.

The Indians are so skilled in woodcraft, that the matter did not trouble me, especially as they showed no indication of regarding it as serious. Thus, when we came to our halting-place, I selected my place for the night, hoping that sleep would be vouchsafed me in sufficient quantity to make up for the past deficiency I had suffered.

By rotation the prisoner was guarded, each taking a term of two hours' duty. My watch was to be from about twelve to two in the morning. Soundly I slept when I was ruthlessly awoke to go on sentry. What would I not have given to have rested longer. Taking my revolver, I sat down upon a log, hating the task, but determined to fulfil it. Half an hour I sat moodily pondering over the past, recalling scenes of different and distant lands, climes where the sun is always bright and gladdening, and where the sparkling seas reflect a thousand glistening lights; where palm and cypress wave, and the coo of the love-sick dove is drowned by the roar of the stealthy man-eater. Fair Japan and its verdant hills, sterile-coasted China and its clay-baked mountains flitted before me like the rapid repetition of dissolving views, when Antoine spoke:

“Give me a chance, captain, and I will repay you some day.”

“I cannot; the Indians have shown their confidence in my honour by placing me as a guard over you, that confidence I will not abuse; at the right time and place I will serve you to the utmost of my ability, you must rest satisfied with this promise.”

While this conversation was going on, the chief's daughter had left her place beside him, soon after

returning. There was something in her manner that raised my suspicions. Closely watching her I observed that in her right hand was a knife, doubtless intended to cut the cords that bound the hands of her lover. In a moment I seized her ; like a fiend she fought, and but for my power of wrist enabling me to disarm her, she doubtless would have done me a serious injury.

The struggle was momentary and noiseless, so it disturbed no one ; however, the prisoner rose as if to assist his ally. Pointing my pistol at him I made him return to his original position ; but it was with the air of one foiled not conquered that he did it.

Soon after I was relieved, and never in life from so distasteful a duty.

It might have been an hour from dawn. Sound had been my sleep, though far from free of dreams, when I was recalled to consciousness by the sharp report of a gun, and the springing up of the various forms that reclined around me. In a moment I comprehended the situation. Antoine had escaped, and unquestionably through the assistance of the devoted Indian girl.

Immediate search was instituted, but by the time the sun had risen, all had returned to camp unsuc-



cessful from want of light to follow the fugitive's track.

But the Indians were not to be foiled thus easily, and resolute and indomitable as bloodhounds, they bided but their time to renew their search; however, the object of their pursuit had gained two hours' law, and if fortune smiled propitiously, his chance of escape looked most promising.

The smoke that had attracted my attention yesterday had now become unpleasantly stifling, yet my comrades thought nothing of it—if there was danger surely they would be aware of it, I argued, and thus satisfied myself, saying nothing, but following the party in Indian file, while they searched every bush and blade of grass for indications of the fugitive's trail. We soon found it, and, at a pace that sorely pressed me, it was pursued, and what direction did it lead? further and further into the dense, stifling smoke. We had been in pursuit about three hours, when a distant dead-like roar, occasionally interrupted by crashes as if caused by the fall of heavy timber, struck on my ear; nearer and nearer we approached it, till there remained no doubt that we were advancing towards a giant forest fire. I pointed out this, called upon the Indians to halt, to turn back and seek a place of safety, but a most unwilling ear did they lend. At length, sparks



of fire could be distinctly seen floating over the tree-tops, and with a deeply uttered anathema and curse they found themselves compelled to desist from further pursuit. But what had become of Antoine, with hell in his heart and murder on his brow? He preferred trusting himself to the devouring element, to trusting to the tender mercies of his own race.

Once we commenced to retire; our retreat was most precipitous, for it was more than doubtful whether we could succeed in gaining a place of safety. Long, severe, and rapid was our march; but swiftly as we fled, swifter far followed the uncontrollable fire.

Again and again I feared I could no longer endure the exertion, but a love of life and a horror to suffer such a death lent me fresh energy. But the human frame could not withstand such exertion long, and full well I felt that unless a river was soon found, that my last tramp, last hunting expedition had been performed.

So near was the conflagration now that we were actually amid glowing embers and ashes; thicker and faster they followed our retreating steps, till all were in momentary peril. Yet the Indians never murmured, showed no indication of fear, but moodily, still energetically, stalked forward. A

quarter of an hour more of this would settle the matter, I felt convinced; in fact, that to prolong the agony further was useless. But again an inward monitor would whisper, "Be a man, show yourself worthy of your race, remember that while there is life there is hope." Still it appeared madness to hope; behind was a wall of flame hunting us down with the persistency that the sleuth hound pursues the deer—two hundred, three hundred yards more, and then—yes, that is the point; but what do the Indians see, for they increase their pace? I strain my eyes to learn. Can it be—yes it is—a river, for the wood has become thin and daylight shines in broken intervals through it; forward! forward! and, worn out, footsore, scorched, I rush waist deep in the rushing water.

. . . . .  
A week or more had passed since my escape, when I found myself back at the shanty. The poor Indian girl was dead—having died only a day previous to our return, so I was only allowed to pay her the last honour that the living can offer to the dead.

Under the birch-tree, beside Skye, she rests—a flower of the forest plucked by the cruel destroyer before it bloomed.

On still air fell  
No solemn knell  
Of steeple bell  
Rung for the dead.

No incense fume—  
No stately plume  
Of sable gloom  
O'erdeck'd her bed.

No taper light,  
No choral rite,  
No priestly might  
Her soul delayed.

No loved ones weep,  
None vigil keep—  
All lie asleep—  
No prayers are said.

But angel band  
With loving hand  
At God's command,  
Guard round her head.

Every hour that my departure for civilisation was delayed, irritated and fretted me; the beautiful scenery, the handsome trees and picturesque rapids ceased to be attractive, and I longed, I cannot say how ardently, for the moment to arrive when I should turn my back on all—yes, and hoped that I never should gaze upon them again. I could not sleep or even rest, everything palled upon me, and made me long for friends and relatives.

The assiduous attention of my Indian boy, ever true and ever grateful to me, were distasteful, but Poteen, the half-bred colley, avoided me as if I were rabid.

The passage of time may be slow, but cannot be brought to an anchor, and the desired morning at length broke, cold and cheerless, but the season of the year was now so late that otherwise could scarcely be anticipated, and fortunately a lowering morning does not always predict a sunless day.

My escort, which consisted of four volunteers and the boy, had left the shanty with the last load, and I was alone, taking a final survey of my premises, to see for myself that nothing was left behind, when the old chief entered. Our intimacy had taught him to shake hands, and as he came forward he held out his honest nut-brown palm; I took it in mine and held it for some minutes without a word being spoken—it was evident his heart was too full for language to express his feelings. At length words came to his relief, and again for the fourth or fifth time he begged me to delay my departure till the spring, pointing out in the most vivid terms the dangers that must surround so long a journey at this season of the year. I was well aware that there was truth in every word he said, but I would have risked

more than life, to being imprisoned here for possibly half a year. When the good old man found my decision was unchangeable, his stoicism fairly broke down and a diamond tear glistened in each eye, while his intonation became thick and indistinct. To witness grief and tears in woman is truly bad enough, "but talk not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of warlike men," and truly the poetess wrote correctly, for I had the greatest difficulty in subduing my tendency to do likewise. An embrace, a muttered prayer to the Great Spirit to protect me was uttered, and so terminated the interview.

Scarcely daring to look back, I took my seat, the canoe glided from the shore, and soon a turn in the river was passed that shut out probably for ever my wilderness home.

We were in the lightest travelling order, for I had given away all I possessed which was not absolutely required for my journey; thus we sped rapidly onwards, and ere darkness came had traversed many miles.

For a week each day was a repetition of its predecessor. Cold, bitter cold at night, with a bright warm sun at noon; still my companions ceased not their labour or gave utterance to a murmur.

As we completed our water navigation, the weather

broke, and so severe was the frost and heavy the fall of snow, that for a week we were forced to halt. A more trying ordeal I never endured, and, but for the Indians, could not have existed through it; but their knowledge of expediciencies overcame what to the white man must have proved his grave.

Again the journey was renewed, and after a long and wearisome march, exactly such a tramp as the French experienced in their retreat from Moscow, we reached the village of Rama on Lake Couchachin.

My liabilities to my gallant escort settled, I left then for Orillia in a sleigh drawn by a fast horse, the last sight of my old friends being obtained through a break in the woodland that displayed a view of the village. As I left them so they stood, unwilling to depart till they had seen the last sight of the white wanderer.

The sudden stopping of the train awoke me from a long and most refreshing sleep; I looked forth, day was breaking, and the white houses of Albany reposed in the distance. City of Albany, whate'er you may boast of, you have reason to be proud of the fair queen of song that claims thee for her home. Mademoiselle Albani I mean, sweetest cantatrice I e'er have listened to.

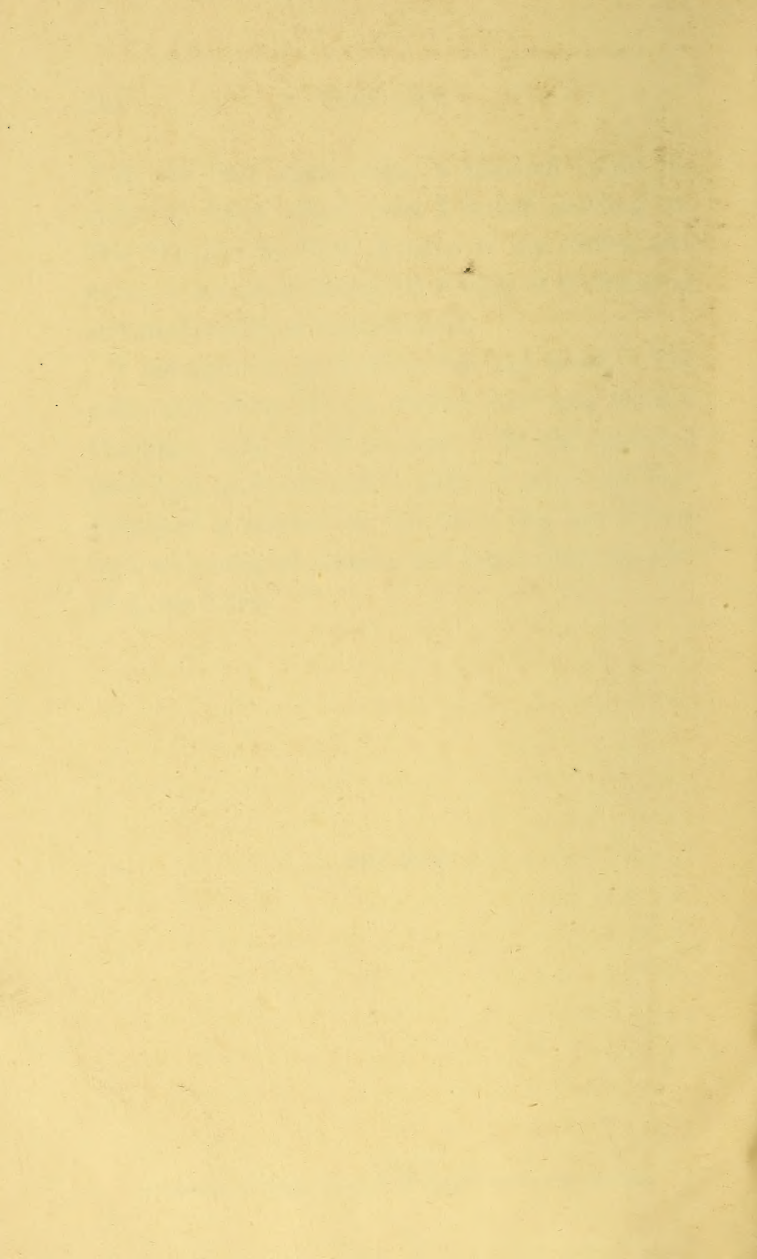
As the train again stops, a hundred voices demand to know which hotel I intend residing at. The Windsor in Fifth Avenue is my choice, and never, I can safely affirm, did I reside at so charming and comfortable an establishment.

I am again in civilisation, but not home. The noble ship *Java*, of the staunch and true Cunard Company, sails on Wednesday. At the appointed hour I got on board, and in spite of gales and fogs Liverpool is reached on the tenth day, and I look back with mingled pleasure and regret upon my year of LONE LIFE.

THE END.

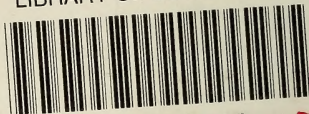








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